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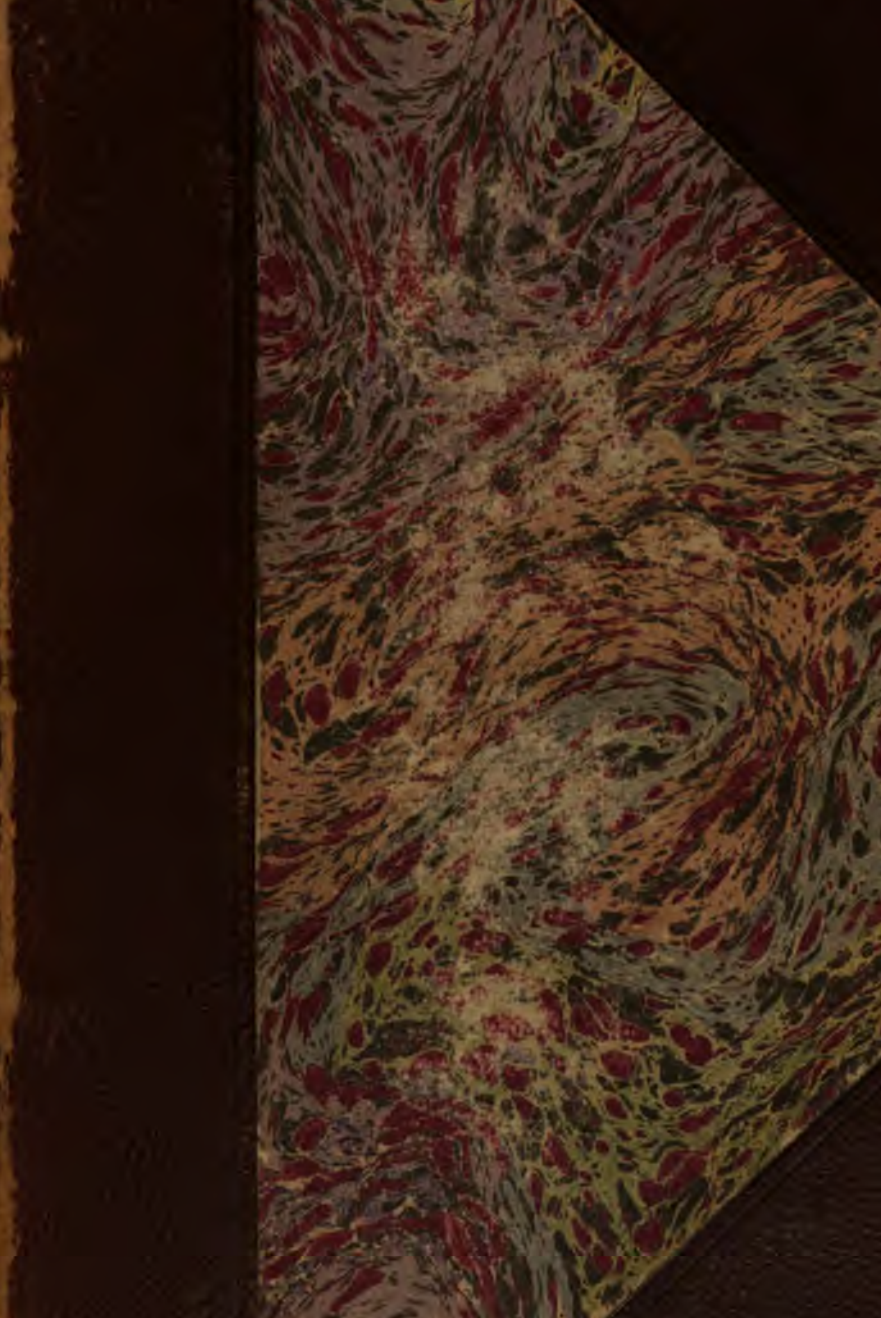
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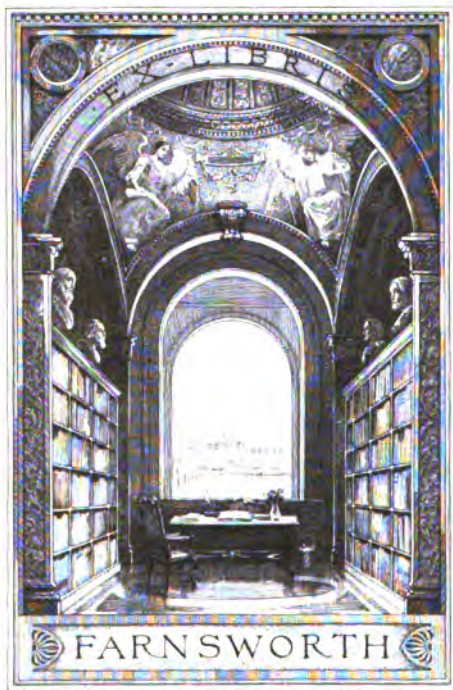
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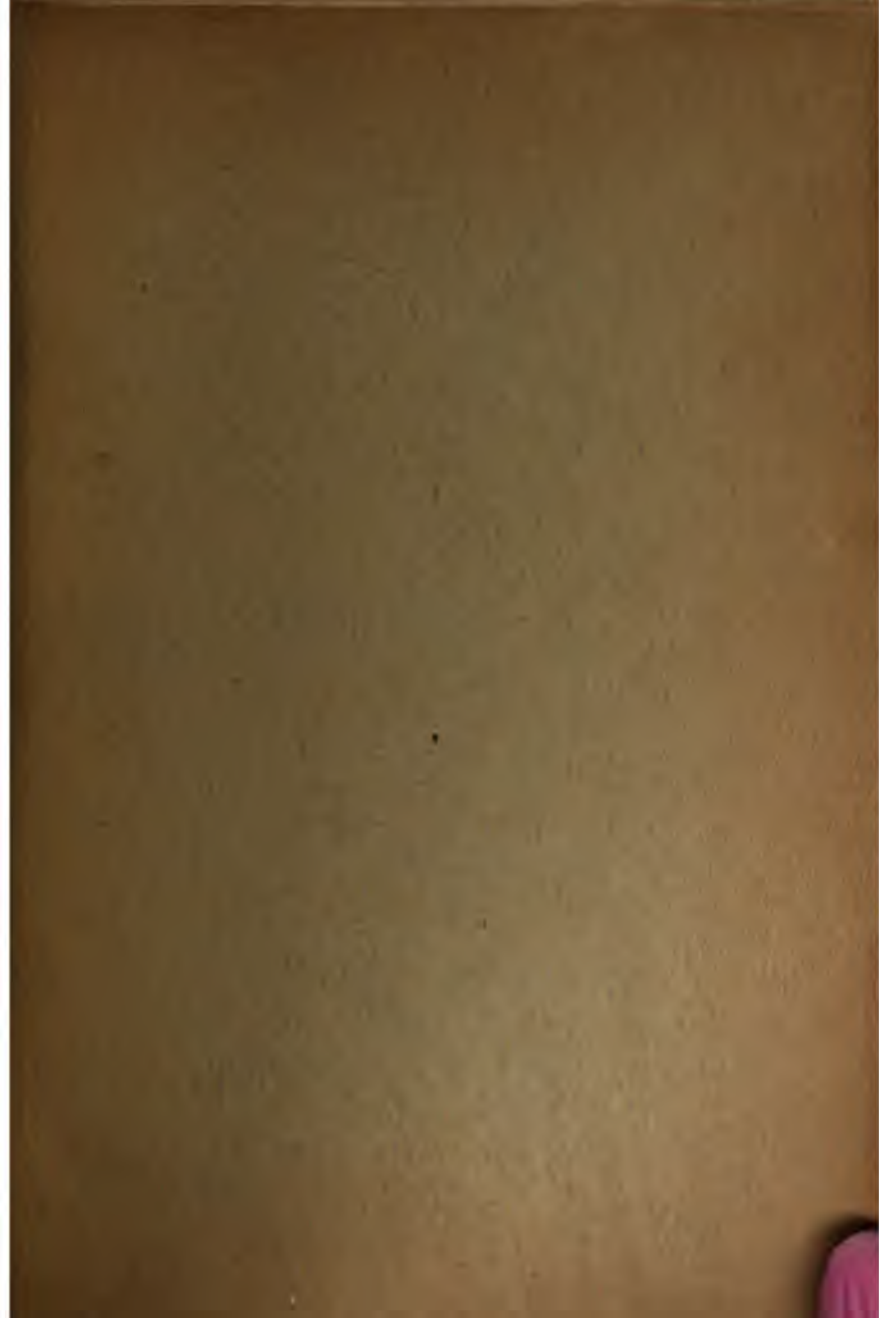
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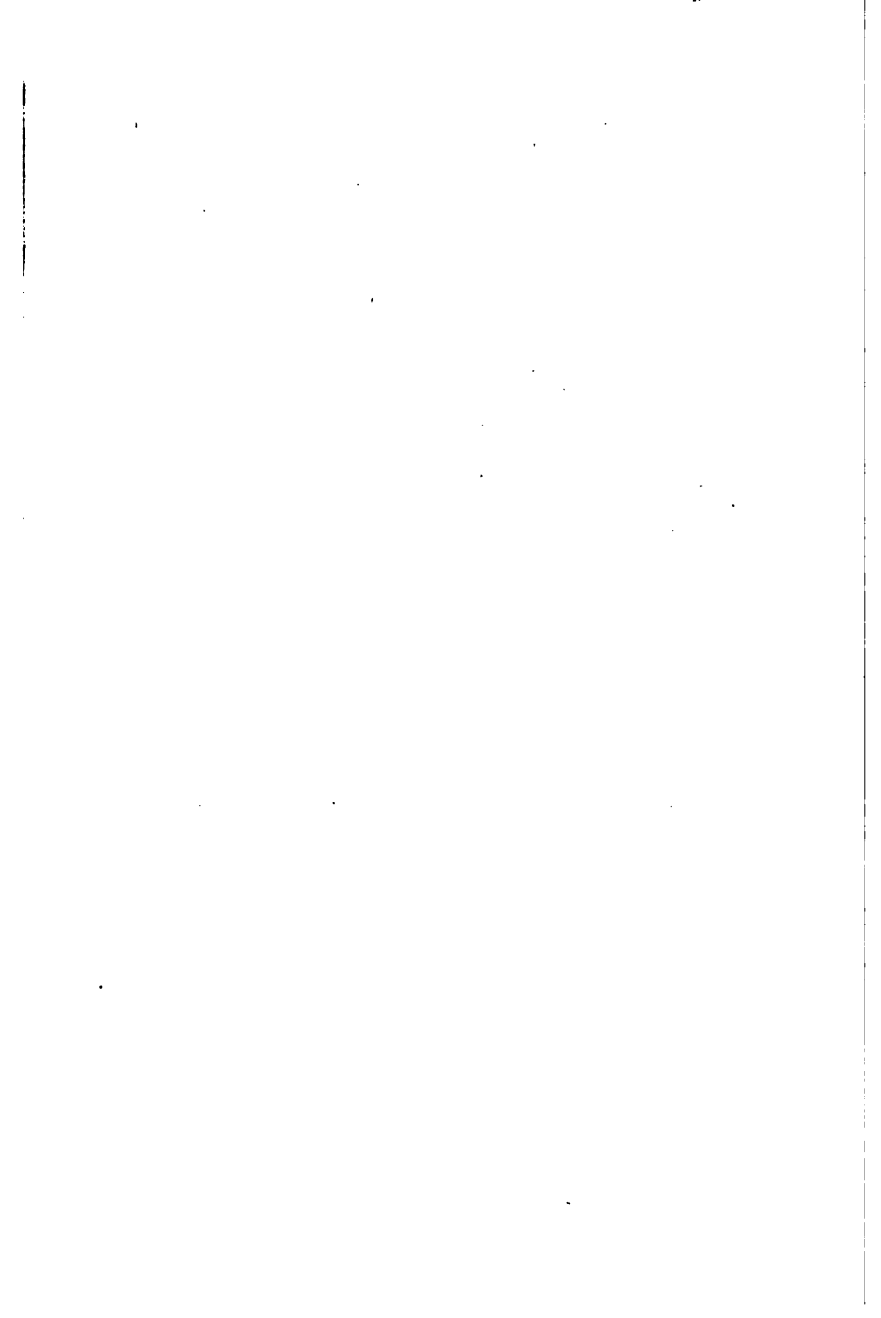
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# CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES



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# CHAUCER'S CANTERBURY TALES

EDITED  
WITH NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

BY  
ALFRED W. POLLARD

VOL. II

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# THE CANTERBURY TALES

## GROUP D

### *The Prologe of the Wyves Tale of Bathe*

“EXPERIENCE, though noon auctoritee  
Were in this world, were right ynogh to me  
To speke of wo that is in mariage ;  
For, lordynges, sith I twelf yeer was of age,—  
Y-thonked be God, that is eterne on lyve ! 5  
Housbondes at chirchē dore I have had fyve ;  
For I so oftē have y-wedded bee ;  
And alle were worthy men in hir degree.  
But me was toold certeyn, nat longe agoon is,  
That sith that Crist ne wente nevere but onis 10  
To weddyng, in the Cane of Galilee,  
By the same ensample taughte he me

*Group D.* In the Ellesmere MS.  
this group follows the  
Man of Law's Tale,  
but the mention of  
Sittingbourne (l. 847)  
shows that it must come  
after the Monk's Tale

with its reference to  
Rochester.

6. *at chirche dore*, where the  
first part of the marriage  
service used to be read.

7. *have y-wedded*, H<sup>6</sup> *might*  
*have weddid*.

12. *taughte he*, E *thoughte*.



That I ne sholdé wedded be but ones.  
 Herkne, eek, which a sharpe word for the nones,  
 Beside a wellé Jhesus, God and man, 15  
 Spak in repreeve of the Samaritan :  
 'Thou hast y-had fyve housbondés,' quod he,  
 'And that ilk man the which that hath now thee  
 Is noght thyn housbonde ;' thus seyde he certeyn.  
 What ~~that~~ he mente therby, I kan nat seyn ; 20  
 But that I axé why the fithé man  
 Was noon housbonde to the Samaritan ?  
 How manye myghte she have in mariage ?  
 Yet herde I nevere tellen, in myn age,  
 Upon this nombré diffinicioun. 25  
 Men may devyne, and glosen up and doun,  
 But wel I woot, expres, withouté lye,  
 God bad us for to wexe and multiplie ;  
 That gentil text kan I wel understonde.  
 Eek, wel I woot, he seyde myn housbonde 30  
 Sholde leté fader and mooder, and také me ;  
 But of no nombré mencioniun made he,  
 Of bigamye, or of octogamye ;  
 Why sholdé men speke of it vileynye.  
 "Lo, heere the wisé kyng daun Salomon ; 35

13. Against this line E has the note, "Qui enim semel ivit ad nupcias docuit semel esse nubendum," a quotation from St. Jerome, *Adversus Jovinianum*, a treatise in favour of chastity, some of the arguments in which the Wife of Bath

from here to line 128 takes up and inverts or combats. See the Rev. W. W. Woollcombe's paper in Part III. of the Chaucer Society's *Essays*.

18. *ilk*, om. E.

21. *why*, E<sup>2</sup> *why that*.

I trowe he haddé wyves mo than oon ;  
 As, wolde God, it were leveful unto me  
 To be refresshéd half so ofte as he !  
 Which gifte of God hadde he for alle hise wyvys !  
 No man hath swich that in this world alyve is. 40  
 God woot this noble kyng, as to my wit,  
 The firsté nyght had many a myrie fit  
 With ech of hem, so wel was hym on lyve.

“Y-blessed be God, that I have wedded fyve !  
 Welcome the sixté, whan that evere he shal, 45  
 For sothe I wol nat kepe me chaast in al.  
 Whan myn housbonde is fro the world y-gon,  
 Som cristen man shal weddè me anon ;  
 For thanne, thapostle seith, I am free  
 To wedde, a Goddes half, where it liketh me. 50  
 He seith to be wedded is no synne,—  
 ‘ Bét is to be wedded than to brynne.’  
 What rekketh me thogh folk seye vileynye  
 Of shrewéd Lameth, and his bigamye ?  
 I woot wel Abraham was an hooly man, 55  
 And Jacob eek, as ferforth as I kan,  
 And ech of hem hadde wyvès mo than two,  
 And many another holy man also.  
 Whanne saugh ye evere in any manere age  
 That hyè God defended mariage 60  
 By expres word ? I pray you telleth me ;  
 Or where comanded he virginitee ?

50. *a Goddes half*, on God's  
 part, *i.e.* with His con-  
 sent.

54. *his*, E<sup>3</sup> of.

58. *holy*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

60. *defended*, forbad.

I woot as wel as ye, it is no drede,  
 Thapostel whan he speketh of maydenhede,  
 He seyde that precept ther-of hadde he noon. 65  
 Men may conseil a womman to been oon,  
 But conseil yng is nat comandement.  
 He putte it in oure owene juggement ;  
 For haddé God comanded maydenhede  
 Thanne hadde he dampned weddyng with the  
 dede ; 70  
 And certein, if ther were no seed y-sowe,  
 Virginitee, wher-of thanne sholde it growe ?  
 Poul ne dorste nat comanden, atté leeste,  
 A thyng of which his maister gaf noon heeste.  
 The dart is set up of virginitee, 75  
 Cacche who so may, who renneth best lat see !  
 “ But this word is nat taken of every wight,  
 But ther as God lust gyve it of his myght.  
 I woot wel that the Apostel was a mayde,  
 But nathélees, thogh that he wroot and sayde 80  
 He wolde that every wight were swich as he,  
 Al nys but conseil to virginitee ;  
 And for to been a wyf he gaf me leve  
 Of indulgence, so it is no repreve  
 To weddè me, if that my makè dye, 85  
 Withouten excepcioun of bigamye,  
 Al were it good no womman for to touche,—  
 He mente as in his bed or in his couche ;

64. *Thapostel whan he*, E  
*Whan thapostel.*

73. *ne*, om. all but EH.

79. *that*, om. E.

85. *make*, husband.

86. *withouten*, H<sup>3</sup> *withoute*.

For peril is bothe fyr and tow tassemble ;  
 Ye knowe what this ensample may resemble. 90  
 This is al and som, he helde virginitee  
 Moore profiteth than weddyng in freletee ;  
 Freelte clepe I, but if that he and she  
 Wolde leden al hir lyf in chastitee.

" I graunte it wel I have noon envie 95  
 Thogh maydenhede preferre bigamye ;  
 Hem liketh to be clené, body and goost.  
 Of myn estaat I nyl nat make no boost,  
 For wel ye knowe a lord in his household  
 He nath nat every vessel al of gold ; 100  
 Somme been of tree, and doon hir lord servyse.  
 God clepeth folk to hym in sondry wyse,  
 And everich hath of God a propre gifte,  
 Som this, som that, as hym liketh to shifte.

" Virginitee is greet perfeccioun, 105  
 And continence eek, with devocioun ;  
 But Crist, that of perfeccioun is welle,  
 Bád nat every wight sholdé go selle  
 All that he hadde, and gyve it to the poore,  
 And in swich wisé folwe hym and his foore. 110  
 He spak to hem that wolde lyve parfitly,  
 And, lordynges, by youre leve, that am nat I.  
 I wol bistowe the flour of myn age  
 In the actés and in fruyt of mariage.

91. *he helde*, E<sup>2</sup> *that*, H *he holdith*.

92. *Moore profiteth*, H<sup>4</sup> *More parfit*.

94. *leden*, E<sup>8</sup> *lede*.

96. *preferre*, surpass.

99. *knowe*, H *wol*.

104. *to*, om. E<sup>8</sup>.

110. *foore*, glossed 'steppes' in E; Corp.<sup>8</sup> *lore*.

"Telle me also, to what conclusioun 115  
 Were membres maad of generacioun,  
 And for what profit was a wight y-wroght?  
 Trusteth right wel, they were nat maad for noght.  
 Glose who so wole, and seye bothe up and doun,  
 That they were makyd for purgacioun 120  
 Of uryne and oure bothé thyngès smale,  
 And eek to knowe a femele from a male,  
 And for noon oother causé,—sey ye no?  
 The experience woot wel it is noght so;  
 So that the clerkés be nat with me wrothe, 125  
 I sey, yis, that they beth maked for bothe;  
 This is to seye, for office, and for ese  
 Of engendrure, ther we nat God displese.  
 Why sholde men ellés in hir bookés sette  
 That man shal yeldé to his wyf hire dette? 130  
 Now wher-with sholde he make his paiément,  
 If he ne used his sely instrument?  
 Thanne were they maad upon a creäture,  
 To purge uryne and eek for engendrure.  
 "But I seye noght that every wight is holde, 135  
 That hath swich harneys as I to yow tolde,  
 To goon and usen hem in engendrure,—  
 Thanne shuld men take of chastitee no cure.  
 Crist was a mayde and shapen as a man,

116. *maad*, E *y-maad*.

117. *for what profit was*, H *in what wise was*, Heng.<sup>4</sup>  
*of so parfyte wys*, Corp.<sup>3</sup>  
 reading also *and why for a wight*.

120. *makyd*, EH<sup>6</sup> *maad*, *made*.

121. Text from Heng.<sup>4</sup>.

130. *man*, E<sup>2</sup> *a man*.

131. *make*, H<sup>4</sup> *paye*.

134. *eek*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

136. *to yow*, E<sup>2</sup> *of*.

138. *Thanne shuld men*, E<sup>2</sup>  
*They shul nat*.

And many a seint sith the world bigan, 140  
Yet lyved they evere in parfit chastitee.  
I nyl nat envye no virginitee,  
Lat hem be breed of puréd wheté seed,  
And lat us wyves hoten barly breed,  
And yet with barly breed Mark tellé kan 145  
Oure Lord Jhesu refresshéd many a man.

“In swich estaat as God hath clepéd us  
I wol persévere, I nam nat precius ;  
In wyfhode I wol use myn instrument  
As frely as my Makere hath it sent. 150  
If I be daungerous, God geve me sorwe ;  
Myn housbonde shal it have bothe eve and morwe,  
Whan that hym list com forth and paye his dette.  
An housbonde I wol have, I nyl nat lette,  
Which shal be bothe my dettour and my thral, 155  
And have his tribulacioun with al  
Upon his flessch, whil that I am his wyf.  
I have the power, durynge al my lyf,  
Upon his propre body, and noght he.  
Right thus the Apostel tolde it unto me, 160  
And bad oure housbondes for to love us weel ;  
Al this sentence me liketh every deel.”

Up stirte the Pardonere, and that anon ;  
“Now, dame,” quod he, “by God and by Seint John !  
Ye been a noble prechour in this cas. 165  
I was aboute to wedde a wyf, allas !  
What, sholde I bye it on my flessch so deere ?  
Yet hadde I levere wedde no wyf to-yeere !”

144. *hoten*, be called ; H<sup>4</sup> *ete* !      146. *Jhesu*, om. EH<sup>3</sup>.

"Abyde," quod she, "my tale is nat bigonne.  
 Nay, thou shalt drynken of another tonne 170  
 Er that I go, shal savoure wors than ale;  
 And whan that I have toold thee forth my tale  
 Of tribulacioun in mariage,  
 Of which I am expert in al myn age,—  
 This to seyn, my self have been the whippe,— 175  
 Than maystow chesé wheither thou wolte sippe  
 Of thilké tonnè that I shal abroche.  
 Be war of it, er thou to ny approche,  
 For I shal tell ensamples mo than ten,  
 'Whoso that nyl be war by othere men, 180  
 By hym shul othere men corrected be;'  
 The samé wordes writeth Protholomee;  
 Rede in his Almageste and take it there."

"Dame, I wolde praye yow, if youre wyl it  
 were,"

Seydè this Pardoner, "as ye bigan 185  
 Telle forth youre talé; spareth for no man,  
 And teche us yongé men of youre praktike."

"Gládly, sirès, sith it may yow like;  
 But yet I praye to al this compaignye,  
 If that I speke after my fantasye, 190  
 As taketh not agrief of that I seye,  
 For myn entente is nought but for to pleye."

172. *thee*, om. E<sup>5</sup>.

173. *in*, E<sup>3</sup> *that is in*.

177. *thilke*, E<sup>2</sup> *that*.

182. *Protholomee*, Ptolemy.

No one has yet verified

the references to the  
 Almagest here and in  
 l. 324.

183. *in*, E<sup>2</sup> *it in*.

184. *yow*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

188. *sires*, H<sup>5</sup> *quod sche*.

'Now, sire, now wol I tellé forth my tale.  
 As evere moote I drynken wyn or ale,  
 I shal seye sooth of housbondes that I hadde, 195  
 As thre of hem were goode, and two were badde.  
 The thre were goodé men and riche, and olde ;  
 Unnethé myghté they the statut holde  
 In which that they were bounden unto me ;  
 Ye woot wel what I meene of this, *pardee* ! 200  
 As help me God, I laughé whan I thynke  
 How pitously a-nyght I made hem swynke !  
 And, by my fey, I tolde of it no stoor ;  
 They had me geven hir lond and hir tresoor,  
 Me neded nat do lenger diligence 205  
 To wynne hir love, or doon hem reverence ;  
 They lovéd me so wel, by God above,  
 That I ne tolde no deyntee of hir love !  
 A wys womman wol sette hire evere in oon  
 To gete hire lovè ther as she hath noon ; 210  
 But sith I hadde hem hoolly in myn hond,  
 And sith they hadde me geven all hir lond,  
 What sholde I taken heede hem for to plese,  
 But it were for my profit and myn ese ?  
 I sette hem so a werké, by my fey, 215  
 That many a nyght they songen "weilawaye !"  
 The bacoun was nat fet for hem, I trowe,

193. Here E has the marginal  
 note : " Bihoold how this  
 goode wyf served hir  
 iii. firste housbondes,  
 whiche were good olde  
 men."

197. So Corp.<sup>3</sup> ; E<sup>3</sup> *the thre  
 men were goode.*

204. *lond*, E *gold*.

209. *sette*, H<sup>5</sup> *bisy*.

217. *fet*, fetched.



That som men han in Essexe at Dunmowe.  
 I governed hem so wel after my lawe,  
 That ech of hem ful blisful was and fawe 220  
 To brynge me gayé thynges fro the fayre ;  
 They were ful glad whan I spak to hem faire,  
 For, God it woot, I chidde hem spitously.  
 "Now herkneth hou I baar me proprely,  
 Ye wisé wyvès that kan understonde. 225  
 "Thus shul ye speke, and beren hem on honde,  
 For half so boldely kan ther no man  
 Sweré and lyé as kan a womman.  
 I sey nat this by wyvès that been wyse,  
 But if it be whan they hem mysavyse. 230  
 I-wis a wyf, if that she kan hir good,  
 Shal beré hym on hond the cow is wood,  
 And také witnesse of hir owene mayde  
 Of hir assent ; but herkneth how I sayde.  
 "Sire, oldé kaynard, is this thyn array ? 235  
 Why is my neighéborès wyf so gay ?  
 She is honóuréd over al ther she gooth ;  
 I sitte at hoom, I have no thrifty clooth.

218. *Dunmowe*, the Dunmow  
 flitch given as a prize  
 to the husband and wife  
 who have never quar-  
 relled, is still an institu-  
 tion.  
 220. *ful blisful was*, E<sup>4</sup> *was ful*  
*blisful*.  
 226. *beren hem*, H<sup>6</sup> *bere hem*  
*wrong*.  
 228. Heng.<sup>4</sup> place *kan* after  
*womman*.

231. *I-wis*, E<sup>8</sup> *A wys*.  
 232. *the cow is wood*, reference  
 as yet unexplained.  
 235. From here to l. 315  
 Chaucer takes his text  
 from a fragment of Theo-  
 phrastus, *De Nuptiis*,  
 preserved in §§ 313, 314  
 of St. Jerome's treatise  
 against Jovinian.  
*kaynard*, coward.

What dostow at my neighéborés hous?  
 Is she so fair? artow so amorous? 240  
 What rowne ye with oure mayde? *Benedicite!*  
 Sire, oldé lecchour, lat thy japés be!  
 And if I have a gossib or a freend,  
 Withouten gilt thou chidest as a feend,  
 If that I walke or pleye unto his hous. 245  
 Thou comest hoom as dronken as a mous  
 And prechest on thy bench with yvel preef:  
 Thou seist to me it is a greet meschief  
 To wedde a pouré womman for costage;  
 And if she be riche and of heigh parage, 250  
 Thanne seistow it is a tormentrie  
 To suffre hire pride and hire malencolie;  
 And if that she be faire, thou verray knave,  
 Thou seyst that every holour wol hire have;  
 She may no while in chastitee abyde 255  
 That is assailléd upon eché syde.

"Thou seyst som folk desire us for richesse,  
 Somme for oure shapé, somme for oure fairnesse,  
 And som for she kan synge and daunce,  
 And som for gentillesse, and daliaunce, 260  
 Som for hir handés, and hir armés smale,—  
 Thus goth al to the devel by thy tale!

241. *rowne*, whisper.250. *if*, H<sup>b</sup> *if that*, omitting  
either *and* (2) or *heigh*.  
*parage*, dignity.252. *suffre*, E *soffren*.254. *holour*, rake.256. *eché*, E<sup>4</sup> *eché a*.257. *seyst*, E<sup>2</sup> *seyst that*.  
*desire*, E<sup>3</sup> *desiren*.259. Pet.<sup>4</sup> mend the line by  
reading *can either sing*  
*or dance*.260. E repeats *som for* after  
*and* (2).

Thou seyst men may nat kepe a castel wal,  
It may so longe assailed been over al.

“And if that she be foul, thou seist that she  
Coveiteth every man that she may se, 266  
For as a spaynel she wol on hym lepe,  
Til that she fyndè som man hire to chepe ;  
Ne noon so grey a goos gooth in the lake,  
As, seistow, wol been withoute make ; 270  
And seyst it is an hard thyng for to welde  
A thyng that no man wole, his thankès, helde.  
Thus seistow, lorel, whan thow goost to bedde,  
And that no wys man nedeth for to wedde,  
Ne no man that entendeth unto hevene. 275  
With wildè thonder dynt and fry leve  
Mootè thy welkèd nekkè be to-broke !

“Thow seyst that droppying houses, and eek  
smoke,  
And chidyng wyvès, maken men to flee  
Out of hir owene hous, a *benedicitee* ! 280  
What eyleth swich an old man for to chide ?

“Thow seyst we wyvès wol oure vices hide  
Til we be fast, and thanne we wol hem shewe,—  
Wel may that be a proverbe of a shrewe. ,

“Thou seist that oxen, asses, hors, and houndes,  
They been assayèd at diversè stoundes ; 286  
Basyns, lavourès, er that men hem bye,  
Spoonès and stooles, and al swich housbondrye,

271. *welde*, rule.273. *lore*, rascal.280. *hous*, E<sup>3</sup> *houses*.282. *seyst*, E<sup>2</sup> *seyst that*.286. *assayed*, E *assayd*.

And so been pottés, clothés, and array ;  
 But folk of wyvès maken noon assay 290  
 Til they be wedded,—oldé dotard shrewe !  
 Thanne, seïstow, we wol oure vices shewe.

“ Thou seist also that it displeseth me  
 But if that thou wolt preysé my beautee,  
 And but thou poure alwey upon my face, 295  
 And clepe me ‘fairé dame’ in every place ;  
 And but thou make a feeste on thilké day  
 That I was born, and make me fressh and gay ;  
 And but thow do to my norice honour,  
 And to my chamberere withinne my bour, 300  
 And to my fadrés folk and hise allyes,—  
 Thus seistow, oldé barelful of lyes !

“ And yet of oure apprentice Janékyn,  
 For his crispe heer, shynynge as gold so fyn,  
 And for he squiereth me bothe up and down, 305  
 Yet hastow caught a fals suspecioun,—  
 I wol hym noght, thogh thou were deed to-morwe !

“ But tel me this, why hydestow with sorwe  
 The keyés of thy cheste, away fro me ?  
 It is my good, as wel as thyn, *pardee* ! 310  
 What ! wenestow make an ydiot of oure dame ?  
 Now, by that lord that calléd is Seint Jame,  
 Thou shalt nat bothé, thogh thou weré wood,  
 Be maister of my body, and of my good ;  
 That oon thou shalt forgo, maugree thyne eyen !

299. *norice*, nurse.300. *chamberere*, E<sup>5</sup> *chambrere*,  
etc.308. *this*, om. EH<sup>3</sup> ; H reading  
*wherfor* for *whi*.311. *make*, E<sup>2</sup> to *make*.

What nedeth thee of me to enquere or spyen? 316  
 I trowe thou woldest loke me in thy chiste;  
 Thou sholdest sey, 'Wyf, go wher thee liste;  
 Taak youré disport, I wol leve no talys;  
 I knowe yow for a trewé wyf, dame Alys.' 320  
 We love no man that taketh kepe, or charge,  
 Wher that we goon; we wol ben at our large.

"Of allé men y-blessed moot he be,  
 The wise astrologien, Daun Protholome,  
 That seith this proverbe in his Almageste, 325  
 'Of allé men his wysdom is the hyeste  
 That rekketh nevere who hath the world in honde.'  
 By this proverbé thou shalt understonde,  
 Have thou ynogh, what thar thee recche or care  
 How myrily that othere folkés fare? 330  
 For certeyn, oldé dotard, by youre leve,  
 Ye shul have queynté right ynogh at eve.  
 He is to greet a nygard that wolde werne  
 A man to lighte his candle at his lanterne.  
 He shal have never the lassé light, *pardee!* 335  
 Have thou ynogh, thee thar nat pleyné thee.

"Thou seyst also, that if we make us gay  
 With clothyng, and with precious array,  
 That it is peril of oure chastitee;  
 And yet with sorwe thou most enforcé thee, 340  
 And seye thise wordés in the Apostles name:  
 'In habit maad with chastitee and shame,  
 Ye wommen shul apparaille yow,' quod he,

316. *nedeth thee*, H<sup>6</sup> *helpeth it*.  
*to*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

324. *Protholome*, see l. 182.  
 329. *thar*, need.

'And noght in tresséd heer, and gay perree,  
As perlès, ne with gold, ne clothès riche.' 345  
After thy text, ne after thy rubriche,  
I wol nat wirche as muchel as a gnat.

"Thou seydest this, that I was lyk a cat ;  
For whoso woldé senge a cattès skyn,  
Thanne wolde the cat wel dwellen in his in ; 350  
And if the cattès skyn be slyk and gay,  
She wol nat dwelle in housé half a day ;  
But forth she wole, er any day be dawed,  
To shewe hir skyn, and goon a caterwawed ;  
This is to seye, if I be gay, sire shrewe, 355  
I wol renne out my borel for to shewe.

"Sire, oldé fool, what eyleth thee to spyen ?  
Thogh thou preye Argus with hise hundred eyen  
To be my wardécors, as he kan best,  
In feith, he shal nat kepe me but me lest ; 360  
Yet koude I make his berd, so moot I thee !

"Thou seydest eek, that ther been thyngès thre  
The whiché thyngès tröublen al this erthe,  
And that no wight ne may endure the ferthe.  
O leewe sire shrewé, Jhesu shorte thy lyf ! 365  
Yet prechestow and seyst an hateful wyf  
Y-rekened is for oon of thise meschances.  
Been ther none othere of thy resemblances  
That ye may likne youre parables unto,  
But if a sely wyf be oon of tho ? 370

344. *perree*, jewellery.350. *in his in*, i.e. at home.357. *eyleth*, H<sup>5</sup> *helpith*.359. *wardecors*, body-guard.361. *make his berd*, cheat him.364. *ne*, from Pet.<sup>2</sup> ; rest om.368. *of thy*, om. E.

"Thou likenest wommen's love to helle,  
 To bareyne lond, ther water may nat dwelle ;  
 Thou liknest it also to wildé fyr,  
 The moore it brenneth the moore it hath desir  
 To consumen every thyng that brent wole be ; 375  
 Thou seyst, right as wormés shende a tree,  
 Right so a wyf destroyeth hire housbond ;  
 This knowé they that been to wyvés bonde."

Lordynges, right thus as ye have understonde  
 Baar I stifly myne olde housbondes on honde, 380  
 That thus they seyden in hir dronkenesse ;  
 And al was fals, but that I took wisse  
 On Janékyn, and on my nece also.  
 O Lord, the peyne I dide hem and the wo !  
 Ful giltyles, by Goddés sweeté pyne ! 385  
 For as an hors I koudé byte and whyne ;  
 I koudé pleyne, thogh I were in the gilt,  
 Or ellés often tyme hadde I been spilt.  
 "Who so first cometh to the mille first grynt ;"  
 I pleynéd first, so was oure werre y-stynt ; 390  
 They were ful glad to excusen hem ful blyve  
 Of thyng of which they nevere agilde hir lyve.

Of wenchés wolde I beren hem on honde,  
 Whan that for syk unnethés myghte thay stonde ;  
 Yet tikled it his herté, for that he 395  
 Wende that I hadde of hym so greet chiertee !  
 I swoor that al my walkynge out by nyghte

371. *likenest*, E<sup>3</sup> *liknest*.

376. *shende*, harm.

389. From H ; Heng.<sup>4</sup> *Whoso*

*that first to mylle comth*  
*first grynt.*

393. *hem*, E *hym*.

394. *thay*, E *he*.

Was for tespyé wenches that he dighte.  
Under that colour hadde I many a myrthe,  
For al swich witte is geven us in oure byrthe,—  
Deceité, wepyng, spynnyng, God hath geve 401  
To wommen kyndely whil they may lyve ;  
And thus of o thyng I avaunté me,  
Atte ende I hadde the better in ech degree,—  
By sleighte, or force, or by som maner thyng, 405  
As by continueel murmure or grucchyng.  
Namely abeddé hadden they meschaunce ;  
Ther wolde I chide and do hem no plesaunce ;  
I wolde no lenger in the bed abyde,  
If that I felte his arm over my syde, 410  
Til he had maad his raunsoun unto me ;  
Thanne wolde I suffre hym do his nycetee ;  
And therfore every man this tale I telle,—  
Wynne who so may, for al is for to selle ;  
With empty hand men may none haukés lure. 415  
For wynnyng wolde I al his lust endure  
And maké me a feynéd appetit,  
And yet in bacoun hadde I nevere delit ;  
That madé me that evere I wolde hem chide ;  
For thogh the pope hadde seten hem biside 420  
I wolde nat spare hem at hir owene bord,  
For, by my trouthe, I quitte hem word for word.  
As helpe me verray God omnipotent,  
Though I right now sholde make my testament,

400. *witte is, E thyng was.*402. *kyndely, naturally.*406. *grucchyng, H chidyng.*407. *Namely, specially.*413. *I, om. H<sup>2</sup>.*



I ne owe hem nat a word that it nys quit. 425  
 I broghte it so abouté by my wit  
 That they moste geve it up as for the beste,  
 Or ellés hadde we nevere been in reste ;  
 For thogh he lookéd as a wood leoun,  
 Yet sholde he faille of his conclusioun. 430

Thanne wolde I seyè, "Goodé lief, taak keepe,—  
 How mekely looketh Wilkyn, ouré sheepe !  
 Com neer, my spousé, lat me ba thy cheke ;  
 Ye sholdé been al pacient and meke,  
 And han a sweeté, spicéd consciéce, 435  
 Sith ye so preche of Jobés paciéce.  
 Suffreth alwey, syn ye so wel kan preche,  
 And, but ye do, certein we shal yow teche  
 That it is fair to have a wyf in pees.  
 Oon of us two moste bowen, doutélees, 440  
 And sith a man is mooré resonable  
 Than womman is, ye mosté been suffrable.  
 What eyleth yow to grucché thus and grone ?  
 Is it for ye woldé have my queynte allone ?  
 Wy, taak it al ! lo, have it every deel ! 445  
 Peter ! I shrewe yow, but ye love it weel ;  
 For if I woldé selle my belé chose  
 I koudé walke as fressh as is a rose ;  
 But I wol kepe it for youre owene tooth.  
 Ye be to blame, by God ! I sey yow sooth." 450  
 Swiche manere wordés haddé we on honde.

Now wol I speken of my fourthe housbonde.

428. *reste*, E *rest*.

429. *wood*, mad.

431. *Goode*, H<sup>3</sup> *Now goode*.

433. *ba*, kiss.

My fourthé housbonde was a revelour ;  
This is to seyn, he hadde a paramour ;  
And I was yong and ful of ragerye, 455  
Stibourne and strong and joly as a pye.  
Wel koude I dauncé to an harpé smale,  
And synge, y-wis, as any nyghtyngale,  
Whan I had dronke a draughte of sweeté wyn.

Metellius, the foulé cherl, the swyn ! 460  
That with a staf birafté his wyf hire lyf,  
For she drank wyn ; thogh I hadde been his wyf  
He sholdé nat han daunted me fro drynke !  
And after wyn on Venus moste I thynke,  
For al so siker as cold engendreth hayl, 465  
A likerous mouth moste han a likerous tayl.  
In wommen vinolent is no defence,—  
This knowen lecchours by experience.

But, Lord Crist ! whan that it remembreth me  
Upon my yowthe, and on my jolitee, 470  
It tikleth me aboute myn herté roote !  
Unto this day it dooth myn herté boote  
That I have had my world, as in my tyme.  
But Age, alas ! that al wole envenyme,  
Hath me biraft my beautee and my pith,— 475  
Lat go, fare wel, the devel go therwith !  
The flour is goon, ther is namoore to telle,  
The bren, as I best kan, now moste I selle ;  
But yet to be right myrie wol I fonde.  
Now wol I tellen of my fourthe housbonde. 480

I seye I hadde in herté greet despit

That he of any oother had delit ;  
 But he was quit, by God, and by Seint Joce !  
 I made hym of the samé wode a croce.  
 Nat of my body in no foul manere, 485  
 But certainly I madé folk swich cheere,  
 That in his owene grece I made hym frye  
 For angre, and for verray jalousye.  
 By God, in erthe I was his purgatorie,  
 For which I hope his soulé be in glorie ! 490  
 For God it woot, he sat ful ofte and song  
 Whan that his shoo ful bitterly hym wrong.  
 Ther was no wight save God and he that wiste  
 In many wise how sooré I hym twiste.  
 He deyde whan I cam fro Jerusalem, 495  
 And lith y-grave under the roodé beem,  
 Al is his tombé noght so curyus  
 As was the sepulcre of hym Daryus,  
 Which that Appelles wroghté subtilly ;  
 It nys but wast to burye hym preciously. 500  
 Lat hym fare wel, God geve his soulé reste,  
 He is now in his grave and in his cheste !  
 Now of my fifthé housbonde wol I telle.  
 God lete hise soulé nevere come in helle !  
 And yet was he to me the moosté shrewe ; 505  
 That feele I on my ribbes al by rewe,

483. *Seint Joce*, Saint Jodocus,  
a Breton hermit of the  
7th century.

486. *certainly*, *E certain*.

491. *ofte*, *H stille*.

498. *Daryus*, the tomb which

Apelles wrought for  
Darius by Alexander's  
order is described in the  
6th book of the *Alex-  
andreis* of Gualtier de  
Lille.

506. *by rewe*, in a row.

And evere shal, unto myn endyng day ;  
 But in oure bed he was so fressh and gay ;  
 And therewithal so wel koude he me glose,  
 Whan that he woldé han my belé chose, 510  
 That thogh he hadde me bet on every bon,  
 He koudé wynne agayn my love anon.  
 I trowe I loved hym besté for that he  
 Was of his lovè daungerous to me.  
 We wommen han, if that I shal nat lye, 515  
 In this matere a queynté fantasye ;  
 Wayté ! what thyng we may nat lightly have  
 Ther after wol we crie al day and crave.  
 Forbede us thyng, and that desiren we ;  
 Preesse on us faste and thanné wol we fle. 520  
 With daunger outé we al oure chaffare ;  
 Greet prees at market maketh deeré ware,  
 And to greet cheepe is holde at litel prys ;  
 This knoweth every womman that is wys.

My fifté housbonde, God his soulé blesse ! 525  
 Which that I took for love, and no richesse,  
 He somtyme was a clerk of Oxenford,  
 And hadde left scole and wente at hom to bord  
 With my gossib, dwellynge in oure toun ;  
 God have hir soule, hir name was Alisoun. 530  
 She knew my herte, and eek my privètee,  
 Bet than oure parisshe preest, as moot I thee.

508. *so, E ful.*517. *Wayte, watch.*521. *H outen alle we our ware,*  
reading *chaffare* in next  
line.522. *prees, crowd.*523. *to greet cheepe, too much*  
to sell.530. *hir name, like that of wife*  
herself.

To hire biwreyed I my conseil al,  
 For hadde myn housbonde pisséd on a wal,  
 Or doon a thyng that sholde han cost his lyf, 535  
 To hire, and to another worthy wyf,  
 And to my necé, which that I loved weel,  
 I wolde han toold his conseil every deel ;  
 And so I dide ful often, God it woot,  
 That made his facé often reed and hoot 540  
 For verray shame, and blamed hymself, for he  
 Had toold to me so greet a pryvêtee.

And so bifel that onés in a Lente,  
 So often tymes I to my gossyb wente,—  
 For evere yet I loved to be gay, 545  
 And for to walke in March, Averill and May,  
 Fro hous to hous to heeré sondry talys,—  
 That Jankyn clerk, and my gossyb dame Alys  
 And I myself into the feeldés wente.  
 Myn housbonde was at London al that Lente ; 550  
 I hadde the bettre leyser for to pleye,  
 And for to se, and eek for to be seye  
 Of lusty folk. What wiste I wher my grace  
 Was shapen for to be, or in what place?  
 Therefore I made my visitaciouns 555  
 To vigilies and to processiouns,  
 To prechyng eek, and to thise pilgrimages,  
 To pleyes of myracles, and to mariages,  
 And wered upon my gayè scarlet gytes.

537. *that*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.540. *often*, H<sup>6</sup> *ful ofte*.550. *that*, E *the*.557. *prechyng*, H<sup>3</sup> *prechyngs*.559. *gytes*, stockings? cp. General Prologue, l. 456.

Thise wormes, ne thise motthes, ne thise mytes,  
 Upon my peril frete hem never a deel. 561  
 And wostow why? For they were used weel.

Now wol I tellen forth what happed me.  
 I seye that in the feeldes walked we,  
 Till trewely we hadde swich daliance, 565  
 This clerk and I, that of my purveiance  
 I spak to hym, and seyde hym how that he,  
 If I were wydwe, sholdé weddē me;  
 For certainly,—I sey for no bobance,—  
 Yet was I nevere withouten purveiance 570  
 Of mariage, nof othere thynges eek.  
 I holde a mouses herte nat worth a leek  
 That hath but oon hole for to stertē to,  
 And if that faillē thanne is al y-do.

I bar hym on honde he hadde enchanted  
 me,— 575  
 My damé taughtē me that soutiltee,—  
 And eek I seyde, I mette of hym al nyght,  
 He wolde han slayn me as I lay up right,  
 And al my bed was ful of verray blood;  
 But yet I hope that he shal do me good, 580  
 For blood bitokeneth gold, as me was taught;  
 And al was fals, I dremed of it right naught,  
 Bút I folwed ay my damés loore,  
 As wel of this as of othere thynges moore.

561. *frete*, devour.567. *hym*, om. H<sup>8</sup>.569. *bobance*, boast.571. *nof*, ne of.575-584. H and many other  
MSS. omit this para-  
graph.577. *mette*, dreamed.583. *But*, four MSS. *But as*.

But now, sire,—lat me se,—what I shal seyn ?  
A ha ! by God, I have my tale ageyn. 586

Whan that my fourthé housbonde was on beere  
I wepte algate and madé sory cheere,  
As wyvès mooten, for it is usage,  
And with my coverchief covered my visage ; 590  
But, for that I was purveyed of a make,  
I wepte but smal, and that I undertake !

To chirche was myn housbonde born a morwe  
With neighébores, that for hym maden sorwe,  
And Jankyn, ouré clerk, was oon of tho. 595  
As help me God, whan that I saugh hym go  
After the beere, me thoughte he hadde a paire  
Of leggès and of feet so clene and faire,  
That al myn herte I gaf unto his hoold.  
He was, I trowe, a twenty wynter oold, 600  
And I was fourty, if I shal seye sooth ;  
But yet I hadde alwey a coltès tooth.  
Gat-tothed I was, and that bicam me weel,  
I hadde the prente of seïnt Venus seel.  
As help me God, I was a lusty oon, 605  
And faire and riche, and yong, and wel bigon,  
And trewely, as myne housbondes toldé me,  
I hadde the beste quonyam myghté be ;  
For certès, I am al Venerien  
In feelynge, and myn herte is Marcien ; 610  
Venus me gaf my lust, my likerousnesse,

600. *a*, om. H<sup>8</sup>.

603. *Gat-tothed*, cp. General  
Prologue, l. 468.

604-626. Much of this passage  
is omitted in H and  
other MSS.

And Mars gaf me my sturdy hardynesse.  
Myn áscendent was Taur and Mars therinne ;  
Allas, allas ! that evere love was synne !  
I folwed ay myn inclinacioun 615  
By vertu of my constellacioun,  
That madé me I koudé noght withdrawe  
My chambre of Venus from a good felawe.  
Yet have I Martés mark upon my face,  
And also in another, privee, place, 620  
For God so wys be my savacioun,  
I ne loved nevere by no discrecioun,  
But evere folwed myn appetit,—  
Al were he short, or long, or blak, or whit ;  
I took no kepe, so that he likéd me, 625  
How poore he was, ne eek of what degree.

What sholde I seye, but at the monthés ende  
 This joly clerk, Jankyn, that was so hende,  
 Hath wedded me with greet solempnytee,  
 And to hym gaf I all the lond and fee, 630  
 That evere was me geven ther-bifoore ;  
 But afterward repented me ful soore.  
 He noldé suffre nothyng of my list ;  
 By God, he smoot me onés, on the lyst,  
 For that I rente out of his book a leef, 635  
 That of the strook myn eré wax al deef.  
 Stibourne I was as is a leonesse,  
 And of my tonge a verray jangleresse ;  
 And walke I wolde, as I had doon biforn,  
 From hous to hous, although he had it sworn ; 640

628. *hende*, prompt.

634. *lyst*, edge (of the ear).



For which he often tymés woldé preche,  
 And me of oldé Romayn geestés teche ;  
 How he, Symplicius Gallus, lefte his wyf,  
 And hire forsok for terme of al his lyf,  
 Noght but for open-heveded he hir say 645  
 Lokynge out at his dore upon a day.

Another Romayn tolde he me by name  
 That, for his wyf was at a someres game  
 Withouten his wityng, he forsook hire eke ;  
 And thanne wolde he upon his Bible seke 650  
 That ilké proverbe of Ecclesiaste,  
 Where he comandeth, and forbedeth faste,  
 Man shal nat suffre his wyf go roule aboute.  
 Thanne wolde he seye right thus, withouten doute :

*Whoso that buyldeth his hous al of salwes,* 655  
*And priketh his blynde hors over the falwes,*  
*And suffreth his wyf to go seken halwes,*  
*Is worthy to been hanged on the galwes ;*  
 But al for noght, I setté noght an hawe  
 Of his proverbes, nof his oldé sawe ; 660  
 Ne I wolde nat of hym corrected be.  
 I hate hym that my vices telleth me,  
 And so doo mo, God woot, of us than I.  
 This made hym with me wood al outrely ;  
 I noldé noght forbere hym in no cas. 665

642. *geestes*, the reference is not to the *Gesta Romanorum*, but to Valerius Maximus (Bk. vi. ch. 3), whence these stories of Sulpicius Gallus and

Sempronius Sophus are both taken.

645. *open-heveded*, bare-headed.

655. *salwes*, willows.

656. *falwes*, fallows.

657. *halwes*, shrines.

Now wol I seye yow sooth, by Seint Thomas !  
 Why that I rente out of this book a leef,  
 For which he smoot me so that I was deaf.

He hadde a book that gladly nyght and day  
 For his desport he woldé rede alway. 670

He clepéd it "Valerie" and "Theofraste,"  
 At whiché book he lough alwey ful faste ;  
 And eek ther was som tyme a clerk at Rome,  
 A cardinal, that highté Seint Jerome,  
 That made a book agayn Jovinian, 675  
 In whiché book eek ther was Tertulan,

Crisippus, Trotula, and Helowys,  
 That was abbessé nat fer fro Parys ;  
 And eek the Parables of Salomon,  
 Ovidés Art, and bookés many on ; 680

And allé thise were bounden in o volume ;  
 And every nyght and day was his custume,  
 Whan he hadde leyser and vacacioun  
 From oother worldly occupacioun,  
 To reden on this book of wikked wyves. 685

He knew of hem mo legendés and lyves  
 Than been of goodé wyvés in the Bible ;

For, trusteth wel, it is an impossible  
 That any clerk wol speké good of wyves,—

668. *so that*, etc., *H that I was al deaf*.

671. *Valerie*, i.e. Walter Map's *Epistola Valerii ad Rufinum de non ducenda uxore*.

*Theofraste*, see note to L 235.

676. *Tertulan*, perhaps Tertulian's treatise *De Exhortatione Castitatis*.

677. *Crisippus*, *Trotula*, not identified yet with any probability.

680. *bookes*, *H bourdes*.

But if it be of hooly Seintès lyves,— 690  
 Ne of noon oother womman never the mo.  
 Whó peynted the leoun? Tel me who.  
 By God! if wommen haddè writen stories,  
 As clerkès han withinne hire oratories,  
 They wolde han writen of men moore wikkednesse  
 Than all the mark of Adam may redresse. 696  
 The children of Mercúrie and Venus  
 Been in hir wirkyng ful contrarius;  
 Mercúrie loveth wysdam and science,  
 And Venus loveth ryot and dispence; 700  
 And for hire diverse disposicioun  
 Each falleth in otheres exaltacioun;  
 And thus, God woot, Mercurie is desolat  
 In Pisces, wher Venus is exaltat;  
 And Venus falleth ther Mercurie is reysed; 705  
 Therefore no womman of no clerk is preysed.  
 The clerk whan he is oold, and may noght do  
 Of Venus werkès worth his oldé sho,  
 Thanne sit he doun and writ in his dotage  
 That wommen kan nat kepe hir mariage. 710  
 But now to purpos why I toldé thee  
 That I was beten for a book, *pardee*.  
 Upon a nyght Jankyn, that was oure sire,  
 Redde on his book, as he sat by the fire,  
 Of Eva first, that for hir wikkednesse 715  
 Was al mankyndé broght to wrecchednesse;

691. *of*, om. E.708. *worth*, etc., H is *not worth*  
a *scho*.709. *sit . . . writ*, sitteth,  
writeth.

For which that Jesus Crist hymself was slayn,  
 That boghte us with his herté blood agayn.  
 Lo, heere expres of womman may ye fynde,  
 That womman was the los of al mankynde. 720

Tho redde he me how Sampson loste hise  
 heres ;

Slepyng, his lemman kitte it with hir sheres ;  
 Thurgh which tresoun loste he bothe hise eyen.

Tho redde he me, if that I shal nat lyen,  
 Of Hercules and of his Dianyre, 725  
 That causéd hym to sette hymself afyre.

No thyng forgat he the penaunce and wo  
 That Socrates hadde with hise wyvès two ;  
 How Xantippa caste pisse upon his heed.  
 This sely man sat stille as he were deed ; 730  
 He wipéd his heed, namooré dorste he seyn  
 But, " Er that thonder stynté comth a reyn ! "

Of Phasifpha, that was the queene of Crete,  
 For shrewednesse hym thoughte the talé swete.  
 Fy ! speke namoore ; it is a grisly thyng, 735  
 Of hire horrfble lust and hir likyng !

Of Clitermystra, for hire lecherye  
 That falsly made hire housbonde for to dye ;  
 He redde it with ful good devocioun.

He tolde me eek for what occasioun 740  
 Amphiorax at Thebès loste his lyf ;  
 Myn housbonde hadde a legende of his wyf.

717-720. H and other MSS. 727. *penaunce*, from Pet.<sup>3</sup> ; E<sup>2</sup>  
 omit. *sorwe*, H<sup>2</sup> *care*.  
 717. *that Jesus*, om. E. 733. *Phasifpha*, Pasiphaë.

Eriphilem, that for an ouche of gold  
 Hath prively unto the Grekés told 744  
 Wher that hir housbonde hidde hym in a place,  
 For which he hadde at Thebés sory grace.

Of Lyma tolde he me, and of Lucye ;  
 They bothé made hir housbondes for to dye,—  
 That oon for love, that oother was for hate.  
 Lyma hir housbonde, upon an even late, 750  
 Emboysoned hath, for that she was his fo ;  
 Lucia likerous loved hire housbonde so,  
 That, for he sholde alwey upon hire thynke,  
 She gaf hym swich a manere lovè drynke  
 That he was deed, er it were by the morwe ; 755  
 And thus algatés housbondés han sorwe.

Thanne tolde he me how oon Latumyus  
 Compleyned, unto his felawe Arrius,  
 That in his gardyn growèd swich a tree,  
 On which he seyde how that hise wyvès thre 760  
 Hangèd hemself for herté despitus.

“O leevé brother,” quod this Arrius,  
 “Gif me a plante of thilké blisséd tree,  
 And in my gardyn planted it shal be !”

Of latter date of wyvès hath he red, 765  
 That somme han slayn hir housbondes in hir bed,  
 And lete hir lecchour dighte hire al the nyght,

743. *Eriphilem*, who betrayed  
 Amphiaras to gain the  
 necklace of Harmonia.  
*ouche*, jewel.

747. *Lyma*, an error for ‘Livia,’

who poisoned Drusus ;  
 this instance and the  
 next are taken from  
 Map.

757. *Latumyus*, Map calls him  
 Pacuvius.

Whan that the corps lay in the floor upright ;  
 And somme han dryven naylès in hir brayn  
 Whil that they slepte, and thus they han hem  
 slayn. 770

Somme han hem geven poysoun in hire drynke ;  
 He spak moore harm than herté may bithynke ;  
 And therwithal he knew of mo proverbes,  
 Than in this world ther growen gras or herbes.  
 "Bet is," quod he, "thyn habitacioun 775

Be with a leoun or a foul dragoun,  
 Than with a womman usynge for to chyde."  
 "Bet is," quod he, "hye in the roof abyde,  
 Than with an angry wyf doun in the hous."  
 They been so wikked and contrarious, 780

They haten that hir housbondes loven ay.  
 He seyde a womman cast hir shame away  
 Whan she cast of hir smok ; and forther mo,  
 A fair womman, but she be chaast also,  
 Is lyk a gold ryng in a sowés nose. 785

Who woldé wené, or who wolde suppose,  
 The wo that in myn herté was, and pyne ?

And whan I saugh he woldé nevere fyne  
 To reden on this curséd book al nyght,  
 Al sodeynly thre levés have I plyght 790  
 Out of his book, right as he radde, and eke  
 I with my fest so took hym on the cheke,  
 That in oure fyr he fil bakward adoun ;

769. *dryven*, E<sup>2</sup> *dryve*.

771. *geven*, E<sup>2</sup> *geve*.

786. *wene*, E *leeve*.

788. *fyne*, *cease*.

790. *plyght*, plucked.

And he up stirte as dooth a wood leoun,  
 And with his fest he smoot me on the heed, 795  
 That in the floor I lay as I were deed ;  
 And whan he saugh how stillè that I lay,  
 He was agast and wolde han fled his way,  
 Til attè laste out of my swogh I breyde.  
 "O hastow slayn me, falsè thief?" I seyde ; 800  
 "And for my land thus hastow mordred me ?  
 Er I be deed, yet wol I kissè thee."

And neer he cam, and kneléd faire adoun,  
 And seyde, "Deerè suster Alisoun !  
 As help me God, I shal thee nevere smyte. 805  
 That I have doon it is thyself to wyte ;  
 Forgeve it me, and that I thee biseke ;"  
 And yet, eft-soones, I hitte hym on the cheke,  
 And seyde, "Theef! thus muchel am I wreke.  
 Now wol I dye, I may no lenger speke." 810  
 But attè laste, with muchel care and wo,  
 We fille acorded by us selven two.  
 He gaf me al the bridel in myn hond,  
 To han the governance of hous and lond,  
 And of his tonge, and of his hond also, 815  
 And made hym brenne his book anon right tho ;  
 And whan that I hadde geten unto me  
 By maistrie al the soveraynètee,—  
 And that he seyde, "Myn owene trewè wyf,  
 Do as thee lust to terme of al thy lyf ; 820  
 Keepe thyn honour, and keepe eek myn estaat,"—

799. *swogh*, swoon.  
*breyde*, woke.

806. *wyte*, blame.  
 815. *of* (2), om. E<sup>3</sup>.

After that day we hadden never debaant.  
 God helpe me so, I was to hym as kynde  
 As any wyf from Denmark unto Ynde,  
 And also trewe, and so was he to me. 825  
 I prey to God, that sit in magestee,  
 So blesse his soule for his mercy deere.  
 Now wol I seye my tale, if ye wol heere.

*Biholde the wordes bitwene the Somonour and  
 the Frere*

The Frere lough whan he hadde herd al this ;  
 "Now, dame," quod he, "so have I joye or  
 blis,  
 This is a long preamble of a tale." 831  
 And whan the Somonour herde the Frere gale,  
 "Lo," quod the Somonour, "Goddès armès  
 two !

A frere wol entremette him evere-mo.  
 Lo, goodè men, a flye, and eek a frere, 835  
 Wol falle in every dysshé and mateere.  
 What spekestow of 'preambulacioun' ?  
 What ? amble, or trotte, or pees, or go sit doun !  
 Thou lettest oure disport in this manere."

"Ye, woltow so, sire Somonour ?" quod the  
 Frere ; 840  
 "Now, by my feith ! I shal, er that I go,

832. *gale*, cry out.

834. *entremette*, interpose.

836. *and*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *and eek*, a clumsy  
 device to help out the line.



Telle of a somonour swich a tale or two  
That alle the folk shal laughen in this place."

"Now ellès, Frerè, I bishrewe thy face!"

Quod this Somonour, "and I bishrewè me 845

But if I tellè talès, two or thre,

Of frerès, er I come to Sidyngborne,

That I shal make thyn hertè for to morne,

For wel I woot thy paciènce is gon." 849

Oure Hoostè cridè, "Pees! and that anon;"

And seyde, "Lat the womman telle hire tale;

Ye fare as folk that dronken ben of ale.

Do, dame, telle forth youre tale, and that is best."

"Al redy, sire," quod she, "right as yow lest;

If I have licence of this worthy Frere." 855

"Yis, dame," quod he, "tel forth, and I wol  
heere."

## WIFE OF BATH'S TALE

In tholdè dayès of the Kyng Arthour,  
Of which that Britons speken greet honour,  
All was this land fulfild of fàirye.

The elf queene with hir joly compaignye 860

847. *Sidyngborne*, Sitting- of this tale is known.  
bourne. Tyrwhitt compares it to  
850. *Hooste*, E. *Hoost*. the story of Florent in  
852. *ben*, E<sup>2</sup> *were*. Gower's *Confessio Am-*  
*antis*, Bk. i.  
*Wife of Bath's Tale*. No original 857. *the*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

Dauncéd ful ofte in many a grené mede.  
 This was the olde opinion as I rede,—  
 I speke of manye hundred yeres ago,—  
 But now kan no man se none elvès mo,  
 For now the greté charitee and prayeres 865  
 Of lymytours, and othere hooly freres,  
 That serchen every lond and every streem,  
 As thikke as motés in the sonnè beem,—  
 Bléssynge hallés, chambres, kichenés, boures,  
 Citees, burghes, castels, hyè toures, 870  
 Thrópés, bernés, shipnes, daÿeryes,—  
 This maketh that ther been no faïryes ;  
 For ther as wont to walken was an elf,  
 Ther walketh now the lymytour hymself,  
 In undermelés and in morwenynges, 875  
 And seyth his matyns and his hooly thynges  
 As he gooth in his lymytacioun.  
 Wómmen may go saufly up and down ;  
 In every bussh or under every tree,  
 Ther is noon oother incubus but he, 880  
 And he ne wol doon hem non dishonour.

And so bifel it that this kynge, Arthour,  
 Hadde in his hous a lusty bachelor  
 That on a day cam ridynge fro ryver,

866. *lymytours*, friars begging in a fixed district.

867. *serchen*, H *sechen*.

871. *Thrópes*, etc., villages, barns, stables, dairies.

875. *undermeles*, morning-meal time.

878. *go*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *go nou*.

881. *non*, the reading of Camb. MS. only; EH<sup>6</sup> *but*, which is pointless.

882. *it*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

884. *fro ryver* (cp. B. 1927) from hawking for river-fowl.

And happed that allone as she was born, 885  
 He saugh a maydē walkynge hym biforn,  
 Of whichē mayde, anon, maugree hir heed,  
 By verray force birafte hire maydenhed ;  
 For which oppressioun was swich clamour,  
 And swich pursute unto the kyng Arthour, 890  
 That dampned was this knyght for to be deed  
 By cours of lawe, and sholde han lost his  
 heed,—

Paraventure swich was the statut tho,—  
 But that the queene and othere ladyes mo,  
 So longē preyeden the kyng of grace, 895  
 Til he his lyf hym graunted in the place,  
 And gaf hym to the queene al at hir wille  
 To chesē wheither she wolde hym save or spille.

The queene thanketh the kyng with al hir  
 myght,

And after this thus spak she to the knyght, 900  
 Whan that she saugh hir tyme upon a day :  
 “Thou standest yet,” quod she, “in swich array,  
 That of thy lyf yet hastow no suretee.

I grante thee lyf, if thou kanst tellen me 904  
 What thyng is it that wommen moost desiren,—  
 Be war, and keepe thy nekkē-boon from iren,—  
 And if thou kanst nat tellen it anon,  
 Yet shal I geve thee levē for to gon  
 A twelf-month and a day, to seche and leere  
 An answerē suffisant in this mateere ; 910

885. *she*, E<sup>2</sup> *he*.

895. *preyeden*, E<sup>4</sup> *preyden*, *preide*.

906. *thy nekkē-boon from*, H  
*thy nek-bon fro the*.

And suretee wol I han er that thou pace,  
Thy body for to yelden in this place."

Wo was this knyght, and sorwefully he siketh ;  
But what ? he may nat do al as hym liketh,  
And at the laste he chees hym for to wende, 915  
And come agayn right at the yerés ende,  
With swich answeere as God wolde hym purveye,  
And taketh his leve, and wendeth forth his weye.

He seketh every hous and every place  
Where as he hopeth for to fyndé grace 920  
To lerné what thyng wommen loven moost ;  
But he ne koude arryven in no coost  
Wher as he myghté fynde in this mateere  
Two creäturés accordyng in feere.

Somme seyde wommen loven best riches, 925  
Somme seyde honóur, somme seyde jolynesse,  
Somme riche array, somme seyden lust abedde,  
And ofté tymé to be wydwe and wédde.  
Somme seyde that oure hertés been moost esed  
Whan that we been y-flatered and y-pled. 930

He gooth ful ny the sothe, I wol nat lye,—  
A man shal wynne us best with flaterye ;  
And with attendance and with bisynesse,  
Been we y-lyméd, bothé moore and lesse.

And sommé seyen that we loven best 935  
For to be free, and do right as us lest,  
And that no man repreve us of oure vice,  
But seye that we be wise and no thyng nyce ;  
For trewély ther is noon of us alle,

935. *seyen*, E<sup>6</sup> *seyn*, *seyn how* ; H *sayen*.

If any wight wol clawe us on the galle, 940  
 That we nyl kiké, for he seith us sooth.  
 Assay, and he shal fynde it, that so dooth,  
 For, be we never so vicious with-inne,  
 We wol been holden wise and clene of synne.

And sommé seyn that greet delit han we 945  
 For to been holden stable and eke secree,  
 And in o purpos stedefastly to dwelle,  
 And nat biwreyé thyng that men us telle ;  
 But that tale is nat worth a raké-stele.

*Pardee*, we wommen konné no thyng hele ; 950  
 Witnesse on Myda,—wol ye heere the tale ?

Ovyde, amongés othere thyngés smale,  
 Seyde Myda hadde under his longé heres,  
 Growynge upon his heed, two asses eres,  
 The whiche vice he hydde as he best myghte, 955  
 Ful subtilly, from every mannés sighte,  
 That save his wyf ther wiste of it namo.  
 He loved hire moost, and tristé hire also ;  
 He preyde hire that to no creäture  
 She sholdé tellen of his disfigure. 960

She swoor him nay, for al this world to wynne,  
 She noldé do that vileynye or synne,  
 To make hir housbonde han so foul a name.  
 She nolde nat telle it for hir owene shame ;  
 But nathélees hir thoughté that she dyde, 965  
 That she so longé sholde a conseil hyde ;

941. *nyl*, E *nel*.*kike*, H<sup>2</sup> *like*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *loke*.949. *rake-stele*, *rake-handle*.950. *hele*, *hide*.951. *Myda*, *Midas*.952. *amonges*, H *among his*.

Hir thoughte it swal so soore aboute hir herte,  
 That nedely som word hire moste asterte ;  
 And sith she dorsté telle it to no man,  
 Doun to a mareys fasté by she ran. 970

Til she came there her herté was a-fyre,  
 And as a bitore bombleth in the myre  
 She leyde hir mouth unto the water doun :  
 " Biwreye me nat, thou water, with thy soun,"

Quod she, " to thee I telle it and namo,— 975  
 Myn housbonde hath longe asses erys two.

Now is myn herte all hool, now is it oute,  
 I myghte no lenger kepe it, out of doute."  
 Heere may ye se, thogh we a tyme abyde,  
 Yet, out it moot, we kan no conseil hyde. 980

The remenant of the tale if ye wol heere,  
 Redeth Ovyde, and ther ye may it leere.

This knyght, of which my tale is specially,  
 Whan that he saugh he myghte nat come therby,  
 That is to seye, what wommen lovè moost, 985  
 Withinne his brest ful sorweful was the goost.

But hoom he gooth, he myghté nat sojourne,  
 The day was come that homward moste he tourne,  
 And in his wey it happéd hym to ryde  
 In al this care, under a forest syde, 990

Wher as he saugh upon a dauncé go  
 Of ladyes foure and twenty, and yet mo ;  
 Toward the whiché daunce he drow ful yerne,

968. That some word must 972. *bitore*, bittern.  
 needs escape her.  
 970. *mareys*, morass. 993. *yerne*, eagerly.

In hope that som wysdom sholde he lerne ;  
But certainly, er he came fully there, 995  
Vanysshéd was this daunce, he nysté where.  
No creäturé saugh he that bar lyf,  
Save on the grene he saugh sittynge a wyf ;  
A fouler wight ther may no man devyse.  
Agayn the knyght this oldé wyf gan ryse, 1000  
And seyde, "Sire knyght, heer forth ne lith no  
wey ;

Tel me what that ye seken, by youre fey !  
Paráventure it may the better be ;  
Thise oldé folk kan muchel thyng," quod she.  
"My leevé mooder," quod this knyght, "certeyn  
I nam but deed but if that I kan seyn 1006  
What thyng it is that wommen moost desire :  
Koude ye me wisse I wolde wel quite youre hire."  
"Plight me thy trouthe heere in myn hand,"  
quod she,

"The nexté thyng that I requeré thee 1010  
Thou shalt it do, if it lye in thy myght,  
And I wol telle it yow, er it be nyght."

"Have heer my trouthe," quod the knyght, "I  
graunte !"

Thanné quod she, "I dar me wel avaunte  
Thy lyf is sauf, for I wol stonde therby ; 1015  
Upon my lyf, the queene wol seye as I.  
Lat se, which is the proudeste of hem alle  
That wereth on a coverchief or a calle,  
That dar seye 'nay' of that I shal thee teche.  
Lat us go forth withouten lenger speche." 1020

Tho rownéd she a pistel in his ere,  
And bad hym to be glad and have no fere.

Whan they be comen to the court, this knyght  
Seyde he had holde his day as he hadde hight,  
And redy was his answe, as he sayde. 1025  
Ful many a noble wyf, and many a mayde,  
And many a wydwe, for that they been wise,  
The queene herself sittynge as a justise,  
Assembled been, his answe for to heere ;  
And afterward this knyght was bode appeere. 1030

To every wight comanded was silence,  
And that the knyght sholde telle in audience  
What thyng that worldly wommen loven best.  
This knyght ne stood nat stille as doth a best,  
But to his questioun anon answerde, 1035  
With manly voys, that al the court it herde.

"My ligè lady, generally," quod he,  
"Wommen desiren have sovereynetee,  
As wel over hir housbond, as hir love,  
And for to been in maistrie hym above. 1040  
This is youre mooste desir, thogh ye me kille.  
Dooth as yow list, I am heer at youre wille."

In al the court ne was ther wyf, ne mayde,  
Ne wydwe, that contraried that he sayde,  
But seyden he was worthy han his lyf ; 1045  
And with that word up stirte the oldè wyf,  
Which that the knyght saugh sittynge on the grene ;

1021. *rownéd*, whispered.  
*pistel*, epistle, story.

1028. *a*, om. E<sup>4</sup>.

1042. *heer*, om. E ; Camb. *al*.

1047. *on*, E *in*.



"Mercy!" quod she, "my sovereyn lady queene!  
 Er that youre court departe, do me right;  
 I taughte this answeere unto the knyght, 1050  
 For which he plighte me his trouthe there,  
 The firste thyng I woldè hym requere,  
 He wolde it do, if it lay in his myght.  
 Bifore the court thanne, preye I thee, sir knyght,"  
 Quod she, "that thou me take unto thy wyf, 1055  
 For wel thou woost that I have kept thy lyf.  
 If I sey fals, sey 'nay,' upon thy fey!"

This knyght answerde, "Allas, and weylawey!  
 I woot right wel that swich was my biheste.  
 For Goddès love, as chees a newe requeste! 1060  
 Taak al my good, and lat my body go."

"Nay, thanne," quod she, "I shrewe us bothè  
 two!

For thogh that I be foul, and oold, and poore,  
 I nolde, for al the metal, ne for oore  
 That under erthe is grave, or lith above, 1065  
 But if thy wyf I were, and eek thy love!"

"My 'love'!" quod he, "nay, my dampna-  
 cioun!

Allas! that any of my nacioun  
 Sholde evere so foulè disparaged be!"  
 But al for noght, the ende is this, that he 1070  
 Constreyned was, he nedès moste hire wedde,  
 And taketh his oldè wyf, and gooth to bedde.

Now wolden som men seye, paraventure,

1059. *biheste*, promise.      1064. *oore*, H *the oore*.  
 1070. *the ende*, E<sup>2</sup> *thende*.

That for my negligence I do no cure  
To tellen yow the joye and al tharray, 1075  
That at the feesté was that ilké day ;  
To which thyng shortly answeren I shal ;  
I seye, ther nas no joye ne feeste at al.  
Ther nas but hevynesse, and muché sorwe,  
For privély he wedded hire on a morwe, 1080  
And al day after hidde hym as an owle,  
So wo was hym, his wyf looked so foule.

Greet was the wo the knyght hadde in his  
thoght,

Whan he was with his wyf abedde y-broght.  
He walweth, and he turneth to and fro ; 1085  
His oldé wyf lay smyllynge everemo,  
And seyde, "O deeré housbonde, *benedicitee* !  
Fareth every knyght thus with his wyf, as ye ?  
Is this the lawe of kyng Arthúrés hous ?  
Is every knyght of his so dangerous ? 1090  
I am youre owene love, and youré wyf ;  
I am she which that saved hath youre lyf,  
And certes, ne dide I yow nevere unright,  
Why fare ye thus with me, this firsté nyght ?  
Ye faren lyk a man had lost his wit ; 1095  
What is my gilt ? For Goddés love tel it,  
And it shal been amended, if I may."

"Amended !" quod this knyght, "allas ! nay,  
nay !

It wol nat been amended nevere mo,  
Thou art so loothly, and so oold also, 1100

1090. *dangerous*, hard to please. 1093. *ne*, E<sup>2</sup> *yet ne*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *yit*.

And ther-to comen of so lough a kynde,  
That litel wonder is thogh I walwe and wynde.  
So, woldè God ! myn hertè woldè breste ! ”

“ Is this,” quod she, “ the cause of youre  
unreste ? ”

“ Ye, certainly,” quod he, “ no wonder is.” 1105

“ Now, sire,” quod she, “ I koude amende al  
this,

If that me liste, er it were dayès thre ;  
So wel ye myghtè bere yow unto me.

“ But for ye speken of swich gentillesse

As is descended out of old richesse, 1110

That therfore sholden ye be gentil men,

Swich arrogance is nat worth an hen.

Looke, who that is moost vertuous alway,

Pryvee and apert, and moost entendeth ay

To do the gentil dedès that he kan, 1115

Taak hym for the grettest gentil man.

Crist wole we clayme of hym oure gentillesse,

Nat of oure eldrès for hire old richesse ;

For, thogh they geve us al hir heritage,—

For which we clayme to been of heigh parage,—

Yet may they nat biquethè for no thyng, 1121

To noon of us, hir vertuous lyvyng,

That made hem gentil men y-called be,

And bad us folwen hem in swich degree.

“ Wel kan the wisè poete of Florence, 1125

1102. *walwe and wynde*, twist  
and turn.

1108. *unto*, H<sup>2</sup> *to*.

1114. *Pryvee and apert*, secret  
and open.

1120. *parage*, dignity.

That highte Dant, speken in this sentence,—  
Lo, in swich maner rym is Dantes tale,—

‘Ful selde up riseth by his branches smale  
Prowesse of man, for God of his goodnesse  
Wole that of hym we clayme oure gentillesse ; 1130  
For of oure eldrés may we no thyng clayme,  
But temporel thyng that man may hurte and  
mayme.’

“Eek every wight woot this as wel as I,  
If gentillesse were planted natureelly,  
Unto a certeyn lynage down the lyne, 1135  
Pryvee nor apert, thanne wolde they nevere fyne  
To doon of gentillesse the faire office ;  
They myghte do no vileynye or vice.

“Taak fyr and ber it in the derkeste hous,  
Bitwix this and the mount of Kaukasous, 1140  
And lat men shette the dorés and go thenne,  
Yet wole the fyr as fairé lye and brenne  
As twenty thousand men myghte it biholde ;  
His office natureel ay wol it holde,  
Up peril of my lyf, til that it dye. 1145

“Heere may ye se wel how that genterye  
Is nat annexéd to possessioun,  
Sith folk ne doon hir operacioun  
Alwey, as dooth the fyr, lo, in his kynde ;  
For, God it woot, men may wel often fynde 1150  
A lordés sone do shame and vileynye ;

1126. *Dant, Purgatorio*, vii.  
121-3: “Rade volte risurge  
per li rami L' umana pro-  
bitate,” etc.

1131. *eldres may we, H aun-  
cestres we.*

1136. *fyne, cease.*

1150. *wel, H<sup>b</sup> ful.*

And he that wole han pris of his gentrye,  
 For he was boren of a gentil hous,  
 And hadde hise eldrès noble and vertuous,  
 And nyl hymselfen do no gentil dedis, 1155  
 Ne folwen his gentil auncestre that deed is,  
 He nys nat gentil, be he duc or erl;  
 For vileyns synful dedès make a cherl;  
 For gentillessè nys but renomee  
 Of thyne auncestres, for hire heigh bountee, 1160  
 Which is a strangè thyng to thy persone.  
 Thy gentillessè cometh fro God allone;  
 Thanne comth oure verray gentillesse of grace,  
 It was no thyng biquethe us with oure place.  
 "Thenketh hou noble, as seith Valerius, 1165  
 Was thilkè Tullius Hostilius,  
 That out of poverte roos to heigh noblesse.  
 Redeth Senek, and redeth eek Boece,  
 Ther shul ye seen expressè, that no drede is,  
 That he is gentil that dooth gentil dedis; 1170  
 And therfore, leewe housbonde, I thus conclude;  
 Al were it that myne auncestres weren rude,  
 Yet may the hyè God, and so hope I,  
 Grantè me grace to lyven vertuously;  
 Thanne am I gentil, whan that I bigynne 1175  
 To lyven vertuously and weyvè synne.  
 "And ther as ye of poverte me repreeve

1155. *nyl*, E *nel*.1156. *folwen*, H<sup>5</sup> *folw*, *folwe*,  
etc.1159. *renomee*, renown; cp.  
Boethius, Bk. iii. Prose 6.1165. *Valerius*, see Valerius  
Maximus, Bk. iii. ch. 4.1168. *Redeth* (1), E *Reed*.1169. *expresse*, E<sup>4</sup> *expres*.1176. *weyve*, forgo.

The hye God, on whom that we bileeve,  
 In wilful poverte chees to lyve his lyf,  
 And certès, every man, mayden, or wyf, 1180  
 May understonde that Jhesus, hevene kyng,  
 Ne wolde nat chesen vicious lyvyng.  
 Glad poverte is an honeste thyng, certeyn ;  
 This wole Senec and othere clerkès seyn ;  
 Whoso that halt hym payd of his poverte, 1185  
 I holde hym riche, al hadde he nat a sherte ;  
 He that coveiteth is a povere wight,  
 For he wolde han that is nat in his myght ;  
 But he that noght hath, ne coveiteth have,  
 Is riche, although ye holde hym but a knave. 1190

“Verray poverte, it syngeth proprely ;  
 Juvenal seith of poverte, myrily,  
 ‘The pouré man, whan he goth by the weye,  
 Bifore the thevès he may synge and pleye.’  
 Poverte is hateful good, and as I gesse 1195  
 A ful greet bryngere-out of bisynesse,  
 A greet amendere eek of sapience,  
 To hym that taketh it in pacience.  
 Poverte is this, although it seme alenge  
 Possessioun that no wight wol chalenge, 1200  
 Poverte ful ofté, whan a man is lowe,

1182. *chesen*, H<sup>6</sup> *chese a*.

1189. *have*, H<sup>5</sup> *to have*.

1192. *Juvenal*, *Sat.* x. 22.

1195. *hateful* (Corp.<sup>3</sup> *hatel*, hostile). E quotes in the margin the answer to the

question “*Quid est paupertas* (Odibile bonum, sanitatis mater, etc.)” from the Dialogue of Adrian and Secundus, found in Vincent de Beauvais.

1199. *alenge*, lonely, wretched.

Maketh his God, and eek hymself, to knowe.  
Poverté a spectacle is, as thynketh me,  
Thurgh which he may hise verray freendés see ;  
And therfore, sirc, syn that I noght yow greve,  
Of my poverté namoore ye me repreve. 1206

“ Now, sire, of eldé ye reprevé me ;  
And certés, sire, thogh noon auctoritee  
Were in no book, ye gentils of honóur  
Seyn that men sholde an oold wight doon favóur,  
And clepe hym fader, for youre gentillesse, 1211  
And auctours shal I fynden, as I gesse.

“ Now, ther ye seye that I am foul and old,  
Than drede you noght to been a cokéwold ;  
For filthe and eeldé, al so moot I thee ! 1215  
Been greté wardeyns upon chastitee :  
But nathélees, syn I knowe youre delit,  
I shal fulfille youre worldly appetit.

“ Chese now,” quod she, “oon of thise thyngés  
tweye :

To han me foul and old til that I deye, 1220  
And be to yow a trewé, humble wyf,  
And nevere yow displese in al my lyf ;  
Or ellés ye wol han me yong and fair,  
And take youre áventure of the repair  
That shal be to youre hous by cause of me, 1225  
Or in som oother placé may wel be ;  
Now chese yourselven, wheither that yow liketh.”

This knyght avyseth hym and soré siketh ;  
But atté laste he seyde in this manere :

1202. *Maketh*, H *Makith him*.

1215. *thee*, thrive.

"My lady and my love, and wyf so deere, 1230  
I put me in youre wisé governance ;  
Cheseth youre self which may be moost plesance,  
And moost honour to yow and me also ;  
I do no fors the wheither of the two,  
For as yow liketh it suffiseth me." 1235

"Thanne have I gete of yow maistrie," quod she,  
"Syn I may chese, and governe as me lest ?"

"Ye, certès, wyf," quod he, "I holde it best."

"Kys me," quod she, "we be no lenger wrothe,  
For, by my trouthe, I wol be to yow bothe,— 1240  
This is to seyn, ye, bothé fair and good.  
I prey to God that I moote sterven wood,  
But I to yow be al so good and trewe,  
As evere was wyf syn that the world was newe ;  
And but I be to-morn as fair to seene 1245  
As any lady, emperice, or queene,  
That is bitwixe the est and eek the west ;  
Dooth with my lyf and deth right as yow lest.  
Cast up the curtyn,—looke, how that it is."

And whan the knyght saugh verrailly al this,  
That she so fair was, and so yong ther-to, 1251  
For joye he hente hire in hise armés two,  
His herté bathéd in a bath of blisse ;  
A thousand tyme arewe he gan hire kisse,  
And she obeyed hym in every thyng 1255  
That myghté doon hym plesance or likyng.

And thus they lyve unto hir lyvès ende

1234. *I do no fors*, I care not. 1242. *sterven wood*, die mad.  
1254. *arewe*, in a row.



In parfit joye ; and Jhesu Crist us sende  
 Housbondés meeké, yongé, fressh a-bedde,  
 And gracé toverbyde hem that we wedde, 1260  
 And eek, I praye Jhesu to shorte hir lyves  
 That nat wol be govérned by hir wyves ;  
 And olde and angry nygardes of dispençe,  
 God sende hem sooné verray pestilence !

*The prologe of the Freres Tale*

This worthy Lymytour, this noble Frere, 1265  
 He made alway a maner louryng chiere  
 Upon the Somonour, but for honestee  
 No vileyns word as yet to hym spak he ;  
 But atté laste he seyde unto the Wyf,  
 “Damé,” quod he, “God geve yow right good lyf !  
 Ye han heer touchéd, al so moot I thee ! 1271  
 In scolé matere greet difficultee.  
 Ye han seyd muché thyng right wel, I seye ;  
 But, dame, heere as we rydé by the weye  
 Us nedeth nat to speken but of game, 1275  
 And lete auctoritees, on Goddés name,  
 To prechyng, and to scolé of clergye,  
 And if it lyké to this compaignye  
 I wol yow of a somonour telle a game.  
*Pardee*, ye may wel knowé by the name 1280

1260. *toverbyde*, to outlive.

1261. *to*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

1270. *right*, om. H.

1276. *auctoritees*, cp. l. 1212.

1277. *scole*, H *scoles*, Corp.<sup>4</sup>

*scole eke*.

That of a somonour may no good be sayd.  
 I praye that noon of you be yuele apayd,—  
 A somonour is a rennere up and doun  
 With mandementz for fornicacioun,  
 And is y-bet at every townés ende.” 1285

Oure Hoost tho spak, “A, sire, ye sholde be  
 hende

And curteys, as a man of youre estaat,  
 In compaignye ; we wol have no debaat !  
 Telleth youre tale, and lat the Somonour be.”

“Nay,” quod the Somonour, “lat hym seye  
 to me 1290

What so hym list,—whan it comth to my lot,  
 By God ! I shal hym quiten every grot !  
 I shal hym tellen which a greet honóur  
 It is to be a flaterynge lymytour ;  
 And his office I shal hym telle y-wis.” 1295

Oure Hoost answerdé, “Pees ! namoore of  
 this !”

And after this he seyde unto the Frere,  
 “Tel forth youre tale, my leevé maister deere.”

1285. *y-bet*, beaten.

1286. *hende*, polite.

1292. *quiten every grot*, repay  
 every groat.

1294, 1295. Between these lines

E<sup>6</sup> wrongly insert 1307,

1308.

1298. *my*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

## FRIAR'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Freres Tale*

Whilom ther was dwellynge in my contree  
 An erchédekene, a man of heigh degree, 1300  
 That boldely dide execucioun  
 In punysshynge of fornicacioun,  
 Of wicchecraft, and eek of bawderye,  
 Of diffamacioun and avowtrye,  
 Of chirché-revès, and of testamentz, 1305  
 Of contractes, and of lakke of sacramentz,  
 And eek of many another manere cryme,  
 Which nedeth nat rehercen for this tyme,  
 Of usure, and of symonye also,  
 But certès, lecchours dide he grettest wo ; 1310  
 They sholdè syngen if that they were hent ;  
 And smalè tytheres weren foule y-shent ;  
 If any persone wolde upon hem pleyne  
 Ther myghte asterte hym no pecunyal peyne.  
 For smalè tithès, and smal offrynge, 1315  
 He made the peple pitously to synge,

*The Freres Tale:* Two Latin stories, one of a wicked seneschal, the other of a lawyer, making the same points as this, were printed by Thomas Wright, and have been reprinted in Part I. of the Chaucer Society's

*Originals and Analogues.*  
 We may be sure that the setting of this story is entirely Chaucer's own.

1304. *avowtrye*, adultery.

1307. *eek*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

1314. *asterie*, escape.

For er the bisshope caughte hem with his hook,  
 They weren in the erchèdeknēs book ;  
 And thanne hadde he, thurgh his jurisdiccoun,  
 Power to doon on hem correccioun. 1320

He hadde a somonour redy to his hond ;  
 A slyer boye was noon in Engelond ;  
 For subtilly he hadde his espiaille  
 That taughte hym whér hym myghte availle.  
 He koudé spare of lecchours oon or two, 1325  
 To techen hym to foure and twenty mo ;  
 For thogh this somonour wood was as an hare,  
 To telle his harlotrye I wol nat spare,  
 For we been out of his correccioun,  
 They han of us no jurisdiccoun, 1330  
 Ne nevere shullen, terme of alle hir lyves.

“ Peter ! so been the wommen of the styves,”  
 Quod the Somonour, “ y-put out of my cure !”

“ Pees ! with myschance and with mysáven-  
 ture !” 1334

Thus seyde our Hoost, “ and lat hym telle his talc.  
 Now telleth forth, thogh that the Somonour gale ;  
 Ne spareth nat, myn owene maister deere.”

This falsé theef, this somonour, quod the Frere,  
 Hadde alwey bawdés redy to his hond,  
 As any hauk to lure in Engelond, 1340

1318. *weren*, E<sup>2</sup> *were*.

1319. H. omits *thanne* and *he* ;  
 Camb.<sup>2</sup> have the spelling  
*jurddiccion*. ? om. *and*.

1323. *subtilly*, H *prively*.

1331. *shullen*, H *shul*, to ; E<sup>2</sup>  
 om. *alle*.  
*terme of*, during.

1332. *the wommen*, E<sup>2</sup> om. *the*.  
*styves*, stews.

1336. *gale*, cry out.

That tolde hym al the secree that they knewe,  
 For hire acquyentance was nat come of newe ;  
 They weren hise approwours prively.  
 He took hymself a greet profit therby ;  
 His maister knew nat alwey what he wan. 1345  
 Withouten mandement, a lewéd man  
 He koude somne, on peyne of Cristès curs,  
 And they were glade to fillé wel his purs,  
 And make hym greté feestès atte nale ;  
 And right as Judas haddé purses smale, 1350  
 And was a thief, right swich a thief was he.  
 His maister hadde but half his duétee.  
 He was, if I shal geven hym his laude,  
 A thief, and eek a somnour, and a baude.  
 He hadde eek wenches at his retenue 1355  
 That wheither that sir Robert, or sir Huwe,  
 Or Jakke, or Rauf, or whoso that it were  
 That lay by hem, they tolde it in his ere.

Thus was the wenche and he of oon assent,  
 And he wolde fecche a feynéd mandement, 1360  
 And somne hem to the chapitre bothé two,  
 And pile the man, and lete the wenché go.

Thanne wolde he seye, "Freend, I shal for  
 thy sake

Do striken thee out of oure lettres blake,

1343. *approwours*, approvers, informers.

1348. *to fille wel*, E<sup>2</sup> *for to fille*.

1349. *atte nale*, at the ale-house.

1356. *sir Robert*, a priest, not a knight.

1362. *pile*, fleece.

1364. *thee*, E<sup>2</sup> *hire*.

Thee thar namoore as in this cas travaille, 1365  
I am thy freend, ther I thee may availle."

Certeyn he knew of briberyés mo  
Than possible is to telle in yerés two ;  
For in this world nys doggè for the bowe  
That kan an hurt deer from an hool y-knowe 1370  
Bet than this somnour knew a sly lecchour,  
Or an avowtier, or a paramour ;  
And, for that was the fruyt of al his rente,  
Therefore on it he sette al his entente.

And so bifel that onés on a day 1375  
This somnour,—everè waityng on his pray,  
Rod forth to somne an old wydwe, a ribibe,  
Feynyng a causè, for he woldè brybe,—  
And happed that he saugh bifore hym ryde  
A gay yeman under a forest syde. 1380  
A bowe he bar, and arwes brighte and kene ;  
He hadde upon a courtépy of grene,  
An hat upon his heed with frenges blake.

"Sire," quod this somnour, "hayl! and wel  
atake!"

"Welcome!" quod he, "and every good felawe.  
Wher rydestow, under this grene-wode shawe," 1386  
Seydè this yeman ; "wiltow fer to day?"

This somnour hym answerde and seyde, "Nay,  
Heere fastè by," quod he, "is myn entente

1365. *thar*, need.

1372. *an*, om. H<sup>4</sup>, inserting  
*elles* before *a*.

1377. *Rod*, om. E<sup>2</sup>; Camb.  
*went*.

1377. *forth*, F<sup>6</sup> *for*.

*ribibe*, old woman.

1379. *And*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

1382. *courtépy*, short coat.

1386. *grene-wode*, H<sup>3</sup> *grene*.

To ryden, for to reysen up a rente 1390  
That longeth to my lordès duétee."

"Ártow thanne a bailly?" "Ye," quod he,—  
He dorstè nat, for verray filthe and shame,  
Seye that he was a somonour, for the name.

"*Depardieux!*" quod this yeman, "deerè broo-  
ther! 1395

Thou art a bailly, and I am another.  
I am unknowen as in this contree;  
Of thyn acqueyntance I wolde prayè thee,  
And eek of bretherhede, if that yow leste;  
Í have gold and silver in my cheste; 1400  
If that thee happe to comen in oure shire  
Al shal be thyn, right as thou wolt desire."

"*Grantmercy!*" quod this somonour, "by my  
feith!"

Everych in ootheres hand his trouthe leith,  
For to be swornè bretheren til they deye; 1405  
In daliance they ryden forth hir weye.

This somonour that was as ful of jangles  
As ful of venym been thise waryangles,  
And evere enqueryng upon every thyng;  
"Brother," quod he, "where is now youre dwell-  
yng, 1410

Another day if that I sholde yow seche?"  
This yeman hym answerde, in softè speche:  
"Brother," quod he, "fer in the north contree,  
Where as I hope som tyme I shal thee see.

1395. *deere*, H<sup>2</sup> *lieve*.

1406. *hir weye*, H<sup>3</sup> and *pleye(u)*.

1408. *waryangles*, butcher birds.

Er we departe I shal thee so wel wisse 1415  
That of myn hous ne shaltow nevere mysse."

"Now, brother," quod this somonour, "I yow  
preye,

Teche me, whil that we ryden by the weye,—  
Syn that ye been a baillif as am I,—  
Som subtiltee, and tel me feithfully 1420  
In myn office how I may moostè wynne,  
And spareth nat for conscience ne synne,  
But as my brother tel me how do ye."

"Now, by my trouthe, brother deere," seyde he,  
"As I shal tellen thee a feithful tale, 1425  
My wages been ful streitè and ful smale ;  
My lord is hard to me and daungerous,  
And myn office is ful laborous ;  
And therfore by extorcions I lyve ;  
For sothe, I take all that men wol me geve, 1430  
Algate by sleyghtè, or by violence.  
Fro yeer to yeer I wynne al my dispence ;  
I kan no bettrè tellè, feithfully."

"Now certès," quod this somonour, "so fare I ;  
I sparè nat to taken, God it woot, 1435  
But if it be to hevy or to hoot,  
What I may gete in conseil prively ;  
No maner conscience of that have I ;  
Nere myn extorcioun I myghte nat lyven,  
Nor of swiche japès wol I nat be shryven. 1440  
Stomak, ne conscience, ne knowe I noon  
I shrewe thise shriftè-fadres everychoon !



Wel be we met, by God and by Seint Jame !  
 But, leevé brother, tel me thanne thy name,"  
 Quód this somonour ; "in this meenè while." 1445  
 This yeman gan a litel for to smyle.

"Brother," quod he, "wiltow that I thee telle ?  
 I am a feend ; my dwellyng is in helle,  
 And heere I ryde aboute my purchasyng,  
 To wite wher men wol geve me anythyng. 1450  
 My purchas is theeffect of al my rente.  
 Looke how thou rydest for the same entente.  
 To wynnè good, thou rekkest nevere how ;  
 Right so fare I, for ryde I wolde right now  
 Unto the worldès endè for a preyè." 1455

"A !" quod this somonour, "*benedicite* ! what  
 sey ye ?

I wende ye were a yeman trewely.  
 Ye han a mannès shape as wel as I,  
 Han ye a figure thanne determinat  
 In hellè, ther ye been in youre estat ? " 1460

"Nay, certainly," quod he, "ther have we noon,  
 But whan us liketh we kan take us oon,  
 Or ellès make yow semè we been shape  
 Somtymè lyk a man, or lyk an ape ;  
 Or lyk an angel kan I ryde or go. 1465  
 It is no wonder thyng thogh it be so ;  
 A lowsy jogelour kan deceyvè thee,  
 And *pardee* ! yet kan I moore craft than he."

1450. *wol geve me*, E *wolde me geven*.

1451. *i.e.* my own profit is the  
 result aimed at in the rent

I pay my lord cp. A. 256.

1456. *sey ye*, H<sup>5</sup> *ye seye* (*ye*  
*say, seye*).

1459. *a*, om. E.

"Why," quod the somonour, "ryde ye thanne  
or goon  
In sondry shape, and nat alwey in oon?" 1470  
"For we," quod he, "wol us swiche formés  
make  
As moost able is oure preyés for to take."  
"What maketh yow to han al this labour?"  
"Ful many a cause, leevé sire somonour,"  
Seydè this feend; "but allé thyng hath tyme; 1475  
The day is short, and it is passéd pryme,  
And yet ne wan I nothyng in this day;  
I wol entende to wynnyng if I may,  
And nat entende our wittés to declare;  
For, brother myn, thy wit is al to bare 1480  
To understonde, althogh I tolde hem thee.  
But for thou axest why labouren we,—  
For somtyme we been Goddès instrumentz,  
And meenés to doon hise comandémentz,  
Whan that hym list, upon his creätures, 1485  
In divers art and in diverse figures.  
Withouten hym we have no myght, certayn,  
If that hym list to stonden ther agayn.  
And somtyme, at oure prayere, han we leve  
Oonly the body and nat the soulé greve; 1490  
Witnesse on Job, whom that we diden wo;  
And somtyme han we myght of bothè two,  
This is to seyn, of soule and body eke;  
And somtyme be we suffred for to seke

1478. *wynnyng*, E *wynnen*.1479. *our*, E *hir*.1479. *wittes*, H *thinges*.1486. *art*, H<sup>4</sup> *act*, *actes*.

Upon a man and doon his soule unreste, 1495  
 And nat his body, and al is for the beste.  
 Whan he withstandeth oure temptacioun  
 It is a cause of his savacioun,—  
 Al be it that it was nat oure entente  
 He sholde be sauf, but that we wolde hym hente,—  
 And somtyme be we servant unto man, 1501  
 As to the erchébisschope, Seint Dunstan;  
 And to the Apostles servant eek was I."

"Yet tel me," quod the somonour, "feithfully,  
 Make ye yow newé bodies thus alway 1505  
 Of elementz?" The feend answerdè, "Nay,  
 Somtyme we feyne, and somtyme we aryse  
 With dedé bodyes, in ful sondry wyse,  
 And speke as renably and faire and wel,  
 As to the Phitonissa dide Samuel; 1510  
 And yet wol som men seye it was nat he.  
 I do no fors of youre dyvynytee,  
 But o thyng warne I thee, I wol nat jape,  
 Thou wolt algatès wite how we been shape,  
 Thou shalt herafterwardes, my brother deere, 1515  
 Come there thee nedeth nat of me to leere,  
 For thou shalt by thyn owene experience  
 Konne in a chayer rede of this sentence  
 Bet than Virgilè while he was on lyve,  
 Or Dant also; now lat us rydè blyve, 1520

1496. *body*, E *soule*.

1498. *a*, E om.; H<sup>2</sup> *the*.

1502. *erchebisshope*, E *bisshope*.

1509. *renably*, reasonably, elo-  
quently.

1510. *Phitonissa*, Pythoness,  
*i.e.* the Witch of Endor.

1518. *i.e.* be able to lecture on  
this theme.

For I wole holdé compaignye with thee  
Til it be so that thou forsaké me."

"Nay," quod this somonour, "that shal nat  
bityde !

I am a yeman knowen is ful wyde ;  
My trouthe wol I holde as in this cas ; 1525  
For though thou were the devel, Sathanas,  
My trouthe wol I holdé to my brother,  
As I am sworn, and ech of us til oother,  
For to be trewé brother in this cas ;  
And bothe we goon abouten oure purchas. 1530  
Taak thou thy part, what that men wol thee geve,  
And I shal myn,—thus may we bothé lyve,—  
And if that any of us have moore than oother,  
Lat hym be trewe and parte it with his brother."

"I graunté," quod the devel, "by my fey !"  
And with that word they ryden forth hir wey, 1536  
And right at the entryng of the townés ende  
To which this somonour shoope hym for to wende,  
They saugh a cart that charged was with hey,  
Which that a cartere droof forth in his wey. 1540  
Deepe was the wey, for which the carté stood :  
The cartere smoot and cryde as he were wood,  
"Hayt, Brok ! hayt, Scot ! what spare ye for the  
stones !

The feend," quod he, "yow fecché, body and bones,  
As ferforthly as evere were ye foled ! 1545  
So muché wo as I have with yow tholed !  
The devel have al, bothe hors and cart and hey !"

1527. *to, H<sup>2</sup> to thee.*

1546. *tholed, suffered.*

This somonour seyde, "Heere shal we have a  
pley ;"

And neer the feend he drough, as noght ne were,  
Ful prively, and rowned in his ere, 1550

"Herkne, my brother ! herkne, by thy feith !

Herestow nat how that the cartere seith ?

Hent it anon, for he hath geve it thee,  
Bothe hey and cart and eek hise caples thre."

"Nay," quod the devel, "God woot, never a  
deel. 1555

It is nat his entente, trust thou me weel ;  
Axe hym thyself, if thou nat trowest me,  
Or ellès stynt a while, and thou shalt see."

This cartere thakketh his hors upon the croupe,  
And they bigonné drawen and to stoupe. 1560

"Heyt ! now," quod he, "ther Jhesu Crist yow  
blesse !

And al his handwerk bothé moore and lesse,  
That was wel twight, myn owene lyard boy !  
I pray God savé thee ! and Seïnt Loy !

Now is my cart out of the slow, *pardee* ! " 1565

"Lo, brother," quod the feend, "what tolde I  
thee ?

Heere may ye se, myn owene deeré brother,  
The carl spak oon thing, but he thoghte another.

1550. *rowned*, whispered.

1554. *caples*, nags.

1559. *thakketh*, smacks ; E<sup>2</sup>  
*taketh*.  
*hors*, plural.

1563. *twight*, twitched.  
*lyard*, grey.

1564. *pray*, E *pray to*.  
*thee*, H<sup>2</sup> *thy* (the) *body*.  
*Seint Loy*, St. Eligius.

1568. *thing*, om. E.

Lat us go forth abouten oure viage ;  
 Heere wynne I nothyng upon cariage." 1570

Whan that they coomen somewhat out of towne  
 This somonour to his brother gan to rowne :  
 " Brother," quod he, " heere woneth an old re-  
 bekke

That hadde almoost as lief to lese hire nekke,  
 As for to geve a peny of hir good. 1575  
 I wole han twelf pens though that she be wood,  
 Or I wol sompne hire unto oure office,  
 And yet, God woot, of hire knowe I no vice ;  
 But, for thou kanst nat, as in this contree,  
 Wynnè thy cost, taak heer ensample of me." 1580

This somonour clappeth at the wydwe's gate :  
 " Com out," quod he, " thou oldé virytrate !  
 I trowe thou hast som frere or preest with thee."

" Who clappeth ? " seyde this wyf, "*benedicitee* !  
 God save you, sire ! what is youre sweeté wille ? "

" I have," quod he, " of somonaunce a bille ; 1586  
 Up peyne of cursyng looké that thou be  
 To-morn bifore the erchédeknes knee,  
 Tanswere to the court of certeyn thynges."

" Now, Lord," quod she, " Crist Jhesu, kyng of  
 kynges, 1590

So wisly helpé me, as I ne may !  
 I have been syk, and that ful many a day ;  
 I may nat go so fer," quod she, " ne ryde ;

1573. *rebekke*, abusive term  
 for an old woman ; so  
*virytrate*, in 1582.

1586. *somonaunce*, E *somonce*.

1587. *Up*, E *Upon*.

But I be deed, so priketh it in my syde.  
 May I nat axe a libel, sire somonour, 1595  
 And answe're there by my procúratour  
 To swich thyng as men wole opposen me?"

"Yis," quod this somonour, "pay anon—lat se—  
 Twelf pens to me and I wole thee acquite.

I shal no profit han therby but lite, 1600  
 My maister hath the profit, and nat I.  
 Com of, and lat me ryden hastily;  
 Gif me twelf pens, I may no lenger tarye!"

"Twelf pens!" quod she, "now lady, Seinté  
 Marie!

So wisly help me out of care and synne, 1605  
 This wyde world thogh that I sholdé wyne,  
 Ne have I nat twelf pens withinne myn hoold;  
 Ye knowen wel that I am poure and oold.  
 Kithé youre almesse on me, pouré wrecche."

"Nay, thanne," quod he, "the foulé feend me  
 fecche, 1610

If I thexcusé though thou shul be spilt!"

"Allas!" quod she, "God woot I have no gilt."

"Pay me!" quod he, "or by the sweete Seinte  
 Anne,

As I wol bere away thy newé panne  
 For dette which that thou owest me of old,— 1615  
 Whan that thou madest thyn housbonde cokéwold  
 I payde at hoom for thy correccioun."

1595. *libel*, copy of the com-  
 plaint.

1596. *procuratour*, E<sup>5</sup> *procu-  
 tour*, *procurours*.

1605. *help me*, E<sup>2</sup> *help me God*.

1609. *Kithe*, show.

1611. *thexcuse*, excuse thee.  
*spilt*, killed.

"Thou lixt!" quod she, "by my savacioun  
Ne was I nevere er now, wydwe ne wyf,  
Somoned unto youre court in al my lyf! 1620  
Ne nevere I nas but of my body trewe.  
Unto the devel, blak and rough of hewe,  
Geve I thy body and my panne also!"

And whan the devel herde hire cursen so  
Upon hir knees, he seyde in this manere: 1625  
"Now, Mabely, myn owene moder deere,  
Is this youre wyl in ernest that ye seye?"

"The devel," quod she, "so fecche hym er he  
deye,—

And panne and al, but he wol hym repente!"

"Nay, oldè stot! that is nat myn entente," 1630  
Quod this somonour, "for to repentè me  
For anythyng that I have had of thee;  
I wolde I hadde thy smok and every clooth."

"Now, brother," quod the devil, "be nat  
wrooth:

Thy body and this panne been myne by right; 1635  
Thou shalt with me to hellè yet to-nyght,  
Where thou shalt knowen of oure privètee  
Moore than a maister of dyvynytee."  
And with that word this foulè feend hym hente.  
Body and soule he with the devel wente 1640  
Where as that somonours han hir heritage;  
And God, that madè after his ymage  
Mankyndè, save and gyde us alle and some,  
And leve thise somonours goodè men bicomè!

1618. *lixt*, *liet*.1644. *leve*, H<sup>2</sup> *leene*.



Lordynges, I koude han toold yow, quod this  
 Frere, 1645  
 Hadde I had leyser for this Somnour heere,  
 After the text of Cristé, Poul, and John,  
 And of oure othere doctours many oon,  
 Swiche peynés that youre herté myghte agryse ;  
 Al be it so no tongé may devyse— 1650  
 Thogh that I myghte a thousand wynter telle—  
 The peynes of thilké curséd hous of helle ;  
 But for to kepe us fro that curséd place  
 Waketh and preyeth Jhesu for his grace,  
 So kepe us fro the temptour Sathanas. 1655  
 Herketh this word, beth war, as in this cas :  
 "The leoun sit in his awayt alway  
 To sle the innocent, if that he may."  
 Disposeth ay youre hertés to withstonde  
 The feend, that yow wolde maké thral and bonde ;  
 He may nat tempté yow over youre myght, 1661  
 For Crist wol be youre champion and knyght ;  
 And prayeth that thise somonours hem repente  
 Of hir mysdedes, er that the feend hem hente !

*The prologe of the Somonours Tale*

This Somonour in his styropes hyé stood. 1665  
 Upon this Frere his herté was so wood,  
 That lyk an aspen leef he quook for ire.

1649. *agryse*, horrify.

1650. *may*, E<sup>3</sup> *may it*.

1654. *Waketh*, watch.

1663. H<sup>5</sup> make the hit more

direct, reading *this(oure)*

*sompnour him repente*,

etc.

1665. *hye*, H *up he*.

"Lordynges," quod he, "but o thyng I desire,—  
I yow biseke that of youre curteisye,  
Syn ye han herd this falsé Frere lye, 1670  
As suffereth me I may my talé telle.

"This Freré bosteth that he knoweth helle,  
And God it woot, that it is litel wonder ;  
Frerés and feendés been but lyte asonder ;  
For, *pardee* ! ye han ofté tyme herd telle 1675  
How that a freré ravysshed was to helle  
In spirit onés by a visioun ;  
And as an angel ladde hym up and doun,  
To shewen hym the peynés that ther were,  
In al the placé saugh he nat a frere. 1680  
Of oother folk he saugh ynowe in wo.  
Unto this angel spak the freré tho :

"'Now, sire,' quod he, 'han frerés swich a  
grace

That noon of hem shal comé to this place ?'

"'Yis,' quod this angel, 'many a millioun ;' 1685  
And unto Sathanas he ladde hym doun,  
And now hath Sathanas, seith he, a tayl,  
Brodder than of a carryk is the sayl.  
'Hold up thy tayl, thou Sathanas,' quod he,  
'Shewe forth thyn ers, and lat the freré se 1690  
Where is the nest of frerés in this place ;'  
And er that half a furlong wey of space,  
Right so as bees out swarmen from an hyve  
Out of the develes ers ther gonné drye

1676. *ravysshed*, E *vanysshed*. 1688. *carryk*, a ship of burden.

1692. *that*, H<sup>2</sup> *than*.

Twénty thousand frerés in a route, 1695  
 And thurgh-out hellé swarméden aboute,  
 And comen agayn as faste as they may gon,  
 And in his ers they crepten everychon ;  
 He clapte his tayl agayn and lay ful stille.  
 This frere, whan he hadde lookèd al his fille 1700  
 Upon the tormentz of this sory place,  
 His spirit God restorèd of his grace  
 Unto his body agayn, and he awook ;  
 But nathèles, for feré yet he quook,  
 So was the develes ers ay in his mynde ; 1705  
 That is his heritage of verray kynde.  
 God save yow allé, save this curséd Frere !  
 My prologe wol I ende in this manere."

### SUMMONER'S TALE

#### *Heere bigynneth The Somonour his Tale*

Lordynges, ther is in Yorkshire, as I gesse,  
 A mersshé contree callèd Holdernesse, 1710  
 In which ther wente a lymytour aboute  
 To preche, and eek to begge, it is no doute.  
 And so bifel that on a day this frere

1696. *swarmeden*, H<sup>5</sup> *swarmed*  
*(swarme)* *al.*

1700. *looked*, E *looke*.

*Summoner's Tale*,  
 the central incident of  
 this was, no doubt,

common property. But  
 the setting of the tale  
 must be Chaucer's.

1709. *Yorkshire*, as, H *Engel-*  
*land*.

1711. *lymytour*, begging friar.

Hadde prechéd at a chirche in his manere,  
 And specially, aboven every thyng, 1715  
 Excited he the peple in his prechyng  
 To trentals, and to geve for Goddés sake,  
 Wherwith men myghté hooly houses make,  
 Ther as diviné servyce is honóured,  
 Nat ther as it is wasted and devoured, 1720  
 Ne ther it nedeth nat for to be geve,  
 As to possessioners that mowen lyve,  
 Thankéd be God ! in wele and habundaunce.  
 "Trentals," seyde he, "deliveren fro penaunce  
 Hir freendés soulés, as wel olde as yonge ; 1725  
 Ye, whan that they been hastily y-songe,  
 Nat for to holde a preest joly and gay,  
 He syngeth nat but o masse in a day.  
 Delivereth out," quod he, "anon, the soules !  
 Ful hard it is, with flesshook or with oules 1730  
 To been y-clawéd, or to brenne, or bake ;  
 Now spede yow hastily for Cristés sake."  
 And whan this frere had seyde al his entente  
 With *qui cum patre*, forth his wey he wente.

Whan folk in chirche had geve him what hem  
 lest, 1735

He went his wey, no lenger wolde he reste.  
 With scrippe and tippéd staf, y-tukked hye,  
 In every hous he gan to poure and pryde,  
 And beggeth mele, and chese, or ellés corn.

1717. *trentals*, a set of 30 masses  
for a dead man's soul.

1722. *possessioners*, members of  
endowed orders.

1730. *oules*, awls.

1734. *qui cum patre*, part of a  
doxology.

1737. *tipped*, H *pyked*.

His felawe hadde a stafe tippéd with horn, 1740  
 A peyre of tables al of yvory,  
 And a poyntel polysshed fetisly,  
 And wroote the namés alwey as he stood  
 Of allé folk that gaf hym any good,  
 Ascaunces that he woldé for hem prey. 1745  
 "Gif us a busshel wheté, malt or reye,  
 A Goddés kechyl, or a trype of chese,  
 Or ellés what yow lyst, we may nat cheese ;  
 A Goddés halþpeny, or a masse peny,  
 Or gif us of youre brawn, if ye have eny ; 1750  
 A dagoun of youre blanket, leevé dame,  
 Oure suster deere,—lo heere I write youre name,—  
 Bacoun, or beef, or swich thyng as ye fynde."  
 (A sturdy harlot wente ay hem bihynde,  
 That was hir hostés-man, and bar a sak, 1755  
 And what men gaf hem leyde it on his bak.  
 And whan that he was out at dore anon,  
 He planed away the namés everichon  
 That he biforn had writen in his tables.  
 He served hem with nyfles and with fables. 1760  
 "Nay! ther thou lixt, thou Somonour!" quod  
 the Frere.  
 "Pees!" quod oure Hoost, "for Cristès mooder  
 deere ;  
 Tel forth thy tale and spare it nat at al."

1742. *poyntel*, pencil.  
*fetisly*, neatly.

1745. *Ascaunces* (E *Asaunces*),  
 as though.

1746. *us*, E *hym*.

1747. *kechyl*, cake.  
*trype*, ? morsel.

1751. *dagoun*, fragment.

1754. *harlot*, rascal.

1760. *nyfles*, trifles.

"So thryve I," quod this Somonour, "so I shal!"

So longe he wenté, hous by hous, til he 1765  
 Cam til an hous ther he was wont to be  
 Refresshéd moore than in an hundred placis;  
 Syk lay the goodé man whos that the place is;  
 Bedrede upon a couché lowe he lay.

"*Deus hic!*" quod he, "O Thomas, freend, good  
 day!" 1770

Seydé this freré, curteisly and softe.

"Thomas," quod he, "God yeldé yow! ful ofte  
 Have I upon this bench faren ful weel;  
 Heere have I eten many a myrie meel;"

And fro the bench he droof away the cat, 1775  
 And leyde adoun his potente and his hat,  
 And eek his scrippe, and sette hym softe adoun.

His felawe was go walkéd into toun,  
 Forth with his knave into that hostelrye  
 Where as he shoope hym thilké nyght to lye. 1780

"O deeré maister," quod this siké man,  
 "How han ye faré sith that March bigan?  
 I saugh yow noght this fourtényght or moore."

"God woot," quod he, "laboured I have ful  
 soore,

And specially for thy salvacioun 1785  
 Have I seyde many a precious orisoun;  
 And for oure othere freendés, God hem blesse.  
 I have to day been at youre chirche at messe,

1768. *goode*, H *husbond*, Corp.<sup>2</sup>  
*bonde*.  
*that*, om. E<sup>5</sup>.

1776. *potente*, tipped staff.

1778. *into*, H<sup>6</sup> *in the*.  
 1783. *fourtenyght*, E<sup>2</sup> *four-*  
*night*.

1785. *salvacioun*, E<sup>2</sup> *savacioun*.

And seyde a sermoun after my symple wit,  
 Nat al after the text of hooly writ ; 1790  
 For it is hard to yow, as I suppose,  
 And therfore wol I teche yow al the glose.  
 Glosynge is a glorious thyng certeyn,  
 For lettre sleeth, so as we clerkés seyn.  
 There have I taught hem to be charitable, 1795  
 And spende hir good ther it is resonable ;  
 And there I saugh oure dame,—a, where is she ?  
 “Yond, in the yerd, I trowé that she be,”  
 Seydè this man, “and she wol come anon.”  
 “Ey, maister, welcom be ye, by Seint John !”  
 Seydè this wyf ; “how fare ye, hertely ?” 1801  
 The frere ariseth up ful curteisly  
 And hire embraceth in his armes narwe,  
 And kiste hire sweete, and chirketh as a sparwe  
 With his lyppe : “Dame,” quod he, “right weel,  
 As he that is youre servant every deel. 1806  
 Thankéd be God, that yow gaf soule and lyf,  
 Yet saugh I nat this day so fair a wyf  
 In al the chirché, God so savè me !”  
 “Ye, God amende defaultés, sire,” quod she, 1810  
 “Algatés welcome be ye, by my fey !”  
 “*Graunt mercy*, dame, this have I founde alwey,  
 But of youre greté goodnesse, by youre leve,  
 I woldé prey yow that ye nat yow greve,  
 I wole with Thomas speke a litel throwe ; 1815

1792. *al*, H *ay*.*glose*, commentary.1794. *we*, E *thise*, Corp.<sup>2</sup> om.1804. *chirketh* (E<sup>2</sup> *chirteth*),  
twitters.1806. *every deel*, every whit.

Thise curatz been ful necligent and slowe  
 To gropé tendrèly a conscience.  
 In shrift, in prechyng is my diligence,  
 And studie in Petrès wordès and in Poules.  
 I walke, and fisshé cristen mennès soules, 1820  
 To yelden Jhesu Crist his propre rente.  
 To sprede his word is set al myn entente."

"Now, by youre leve, O deerè sire," quod she,  
 "Chideth him weel, for, seintè Trinitee!  
 He is as angry as a pissémyre, 1825  
 Though that he have al that he kan desire,  
 Though I him wrye a-nyght and make hym warm,  
 And on hym leye my leg, outhir myn arm,  
 He groneth lyk oure boor, lith in oure sty.  
 Oother desport ryght noon of hym have I, 1830  
 I may nat plese hym in no maner cas."

"O Thomas, *je vous dy*, Thomas! Thomas!  
 This maketh the feend, this mostè ben amended;  
 Ire is a thyng that hyé God defended,  
 And therof wol I speke a word or two." 1835

"Now, maister," quod the wyf, "er that I go,  
 What, wol ye dyne? I wol go ther-abouté."

"Now, damé," quod he, "*je vous dy sanz  
 doute*,  
 Have I nat of a capoun but the lyvere,  
 And of youre softè breed nat but a shyvere, 1840  
 And after that a rosted piggès heed,—

1817. *gropé*, probe.1818. *in* (2), H and.1825. *pissemýre*, an ant.1827. *wrye*, cover.1834. *defended*, forbade.



But that I nolde no beest for me were deed,—  
Thanne hadde I with yow hoonly suffisaunce,  
I am a man of litel sustenaunce.  
My spirit hath his fostryng in the Bible, 1845  
The body is ay so redy and penyble  
To waké, that my stomak is destroyed ;  
I prey yow, damé, ye be nat anoyed,  
Though I so freendly yow my conseil shewe.  
By God, I wolde nat telle it but a fewe !” 1850  
“Now, sire,” quod she, “but o word er I go :  
My child is deed withinne thise wykés two,  
Soone after that ye wente out of this toun.”  
“His deeth saugh I by revelacioun,”  
Seith this frere, “at hoom in oure dortour. 1855  
I dar wel seyn that er that half an hour  
After his deeth, I saugh hym born to blisse  
In my avisioun, so God me wisse !  
So dide our sexteyn and oure fermerer,  
That han been trewé frerés fifty yeer,— 1860  
They may now, God be thanked of his loone !  
Maken hir jubilee, and walke allone.  
And up I roos, and al oure covent eke,  
With many a tearé trikyng on my cheke,  
Withouten noyse, or claterynge of belles, 1865  
*Te deum* was oure song and no thyng elles ;  
Save that to Crist I seyde an orisoun,  
Thankyng hym of his revelacioun ;

1855. *dortour*, dormitory.1859. *fermerer*, keeper of the infirmary.1861. *loone*, loan.

For, sire and damé, trusteth me right weel,  
 Oure orisons been moore effectueel, 1870  
 And moore we seen of Cristés secree thynges,  
 Than burel folk, al though they weren kynges.  
 We lyve in poverte and in abstinence,  
 And burell folk in richesse and despence  
 Of mete and drynke, and in hir foul delit. 1875  
 We han this worldés lust al in despit.  
 Lazar and Dives lyveden diversly  
 And diverse gerdoun hadden they ther-by.  
 Who so wol preye he moot faste and be clene,  
 And fatte his soule and make his body lene. 1880  
 We fare as seith thapostle; clooth and foode  
 Suffisen us, though they be nat ful goode;  
 The clenness and the fastynge of us freres  
 Maketh that Crist accepteth oure preyes.

“Lo, Moyses fourty dayes and fourty nyght 1885  
 Fasted, er that the heighé God of myght  
 Spak with hym in the mount of Synay.  
 With empty wombe, fastynge many a day,  
 Receyved he the lawé that was writen  
 With Goddés fynger; and Elye, wel ye witen, 1890  
 In mount Oreb, er he hadde any speche  
 With hyé God, that is oure lyvès leche,  
 He fasted longe, and was in contemplanche.

“Aaron, that hadde the temple in governaunce,  
 And eek the othere preestés everichon, 1895  
 Into the temple whan they sholdé gon

1870. *moore*, E<sup>2</sup> *wel moore*. 1872. *burel*, *lay*.

1895. *the*, E<sup>4</sup> *that*.

To preyé for the peple, and do servyse,  
 They nolden drynken in no maner wyse  
 No drynké which that myghte hem dronké make ;  
 But there, in abstinencé preyé and wake, 1900  
 Lest that they deyden:—taak heede what I seye,—  
 But they be sobre that for the peple preyé,  
 War that !—I seye namoore,—for it suffiseth.  
 Oure Lord Jhesu, as hooly writ devyseth,  
 Gaf us ensample of fastyngé and preyerés ; 1905  
 Therfore we mendynantz, we sely freres,  
 Been wedded to povérte and continence,  
 To charite, humblesse, and abstinence,  
 To persecucioun for rightwisnesse,  
 To wepyngé, misericordé and clennessé ; 1910  
 And therfore may ye se that oure preyerés,—  
 I speke of us, we mendynantz, we freres,—  
 Been to the hyé God moore acceptable  
 Than yourés with youre feestés at the table.  
 Fro Paradys first, if I shal nat lye, 1915  
 Was man out chacéd for his glotonye,  
 And chaast was man in Paradys certeyn.

“ But herkné, Thomas, what I shal the seyn,  
 I ne have no text of it, as I suppose,  
 But I shal fynde it in a maner glose, 1920  
 That specially oure sweeté Lord Jhesus  
 Spak this by frerés whan he seyde thus :

“ ‘ Blessed be they that povere in spirit been,’—  
 And so forth al the gospel may ye seen

1906. *sely*, innocent.1918. *the*, om. E<sup>5</sup>.1924. *al*, H<sup>2</sup> *in*.

When it be likker oure professioun, 1925  
 Or hirs that swymmen in possessioun,—  
 Fy on hire pompe and on hire glotonye !  
 And for hir lewédnesse, I hem diffye !

“ Me thynketh they been lyk Jovinyan,  
 Fat as a whale, and walkynge as a swan, 1930  
 Al vinolent as botel in the spence.

Hir preyere is of ful greet reverence  
 Whan they for soulès seye the Psalm of Davit,—  
 Lo, ‘ buf ’ they seye, *cor meum eructavit*,—  
 Who folweth Cristes gospel, and his foore, 1935

But we that humble been and chaast and poore,  
 Werkeris of Goddès word, not auditours ?  
 Therefore, right as an hauk up at a sours  
 Up springeth into their, right so prayeres  
 Of charitable and chastè, bisy freres 1940

Maken hir sours to Goddès erès two.  
 Thomas, Thomas, so moote I ryde or go,—  
 And by that lord that clepid is Seint Yve !  
 Nere thou oure brother sholdestou nat thryve !  
 In our chapítre praye we day and nyght 1945  
 To Crist that he thee sendè heele and myght  
 Thy body for to weelden, hastily.”

“ God woot,” quod he, “ no thyng therof feele I !  
 As help me Crist, as I, in fewè yeres,

1927. *on* (2), om. E<sup>2</sup>.

1929. *Jovinyan*, probably the mythical emperor of the *Gesta Romanorum*.

1931. *spence*, buttery.

1934. *buf* (E *but*), an imitation of the sound.

1935. *foore*, course.

1938. *sours*, rising.

1939. *their*, the air.

1944. *oure brother*, i.e. a lay associate ; cf. *infra* ll. 2126-28.

1949. *I in*, E<sup>4</sup> *in a* (*in*).

Han spent upon diversè manere freres 1950  
 Ful many a pound, yet fare I never the bet.  
 Certeyn my good I have almoost biset, —  
 Farwel my gold, for it is al ago !”

The frere answerde, “ O Thomas, dostow so ?  
 What nedeth yow diversè frerès seche ? 1955  
 What nedeth hym that hath a parfit leche  
 To sechen othere lechès in the toun ?  
 Youre inconstance is youre confusioun.  
 Holde ye thanne me, or ellès oure covent,  
 To praye for yow been insufficient ? 1960  
 Thomas, that japé nys nat worth a myte ;  
 Youre maladye is for we han to lyte.  
 A ! gif that covent half a quarter otes !  
 A ! gif that covent foure and twenty grotes !  
 A ! gif that frere a peny, and lat hym go ! 1965  
 Nay, nay, Thomas, it may no thyng be so !  
 What is a ferthyng worth parted in twelve ?  
 Lo ech thyng that is oned in it selve  
 Is moorè strong than whan it is to-scatered.  
 Thomas, of me thou shalt nat been y-flatered ; 1970  
 Thou woldest han oure labour al for noght ;  
 The hyé God, that al this world hath wroght,  
 Seith that the werkman worthy is his hyre.  
 Thomas, noght of youre tresor I desire,  
 As for my self, but that al oure covent 1975  
 To preye for yow is ay so diligent,  
 And for to buylden Cristès owene chirche.

1950. *han*, E<sup>4</sup> *I han*.1952. *biset*, employed.1962. *to lyte*, too little.

Thomas, if ye wol lernen for to wirche  
 Of buyldynge up of chirches, may ye fynde  
 If it be good in Thomas lyf of Inde. 1980  
 Ye lye heere ful of anger and of ire,  
 With which the devel set youre herte afyre,  
 And chiden heere the sely innocent,  
 Youre wyf, that is so meke and pacient ;  
 And therfore, Thomas, trowe me if thee leste, 1985  
 Ne stryve nat with thy wyf, as for thy beste ;  
 And ber this word away now, by thy feith,  
 Touchynge this thyng, lo what the wisé seith,  
 'Withinne thyn hous ne be thou no leoun ;  
 To thy subgitz do noon oppressioun, 1990  
 Ne makè thyne acqueyntis fro the flee.'  
 And, Thomas, yet eft-soones I chargè thee,  
 Be war of yre that in thy bosom slepeth,  
 War fro the serpent that so slily crepeth  
 Under the gras and styngeth subtilly ; 1995  
 Be war, my sone, and herkne patiently,  
 That twenty thousand men han lost hir lyves  
 For stryvyng with hir lemmans and hir wyves.  
 Now sith ye han so hooly, meke a wyf,  
 What nedeth yow, Thomas, to maken stryf? 2000  
 Ther nys, y-wys, no serpent so cruél  
 Whan man tret on his tayl, ne half so fel

1980. *Thomas*, St. Thomas pro-  
 fessed to be an architect,  
 but the palace he built  
 for the Indian king was  
 in heaven.  
 1982. *and*, om. E.  
 1988. *the wise*, H<sup>5</sup> *the wise man*.

1991. *acquyentis fro the*, E<sup>6</sup>  
*aqueyntance(s) nat for to*.  
 1993. *of yre*, so Petworth ; rest  
*from or for hir (hire)*.  
 1994. *War*, E<sup>5</sup> *Bewar*.  
 2002. *Whan*, E *What*.  
*Tret*, treadeth.

As womman is, whan she hath caught an ire ;  
 Vengeance is thanné al that they desire.  
 Ire is a synne, oon of the grete of sevene, 2005  
 Abhomynable unto the God of hevene,  
 And to hymself it is destruccioun.  
 This every lewéd viker, or persoun,  
 Kan seye, how ire engendreth homycide.  
 Ire is in sooth executour of pryde. 2010  
 I koude of ire seye so muché sorwe  
 My talé sholdé lasté til tomorwe ;  
 And therfore preye I God, bothe day and nyght,  
 An irous man God sende hym litel myght.  
 It is greet harme and certés greet pitee 2015  
 To sette an irous man in heigh degree.  
 "Whilom ther was an irous potestat,  
 As seith Senek, that durynge his estaat  
 Upon a day out ryden knyghtés two ;  
 And as Fortúné wolde that it were so 2020  
 That oon of hem cam hoom, that oother noght.  
 Anon the knyght bifore the juge is broght,  
 That seyde thus : 'Thou hast thy felawe slayn,  
 For which I deme thee to the deeth certayn ;'  
 And to another knyght comanded he, 2025  
 'Go lede hym to the deeth, I chargé thee !'  
 And happed as they wenté by the weye,  
 Toward the placé ther he sholdé deye,  
 The knyght cam which men wenden had be deed.

2015. *certes*, E<sup>3</sup> *EEK*, H *also*.Seneca, *De Ira*, i. 16, of  
Cn. Piso (T.)2018. *Senek*, this story is told by2024. *the*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

Thanne thoughté they it was the besté reed, 2030  
To lede hem bothé to the juge agayn.

They seiden, 'Lord, the knyght ne hath nat slayn  
His felawe; heere he standeth hool alyve.'

'Ye shul be deed,' quod he, 'so moot I thryve!  
That is to seyn, bothe oon, and two, and thre.'

And to the firsté knyght right thus spak he: 2036

'I dampnéd thee, thou most algate be deed;

And thou, also, most nedès lese thyn heed,

For thou art causé why thy felawe deyth;'

And to the thriddé knyght right thus he seith: 2040

'Thou hast nat doon that I comanded thee;'

And thus he dide doon sleen hem allé thre.'

"Irous Cambises was eek dronkelewe

And ay delited hym to been a shrewe;

And so bifel a lord of his meynée, 2045

That lovéd vertuous moralitee,

Seyde on a day bitwene hem two right thus:

"'A lord is lost if he be vicious,

And dronkenesse is eek a foul record

Of any man, and namely in a lord. 2050

Ther is ful many an eye, and many an ere,

Awaityng on a lord, and he noot where.

For Goddès love drynk moore attemprely!

Wyn maketh man to lesen wrecchedly

His mynde and eek hise lymès everichon.' 2055

"'The revers shaltou se,' quod he anon,

'And preeve it by thyn owene experience,

2043. *Cambises*, this story is one in Herodotus, Bk.  
also in Seneca, iii. 14; iii. (T.)  
it differs a little from 2055. *eek*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.



That wyn ne dooth to folk no swich offence.  
 Ther is no wyn bireveth me my myght  
 Of hand, ne foot, ne of myne eyen sight ;' 2060  
 And for despit he drank ful muchel moore,  
 An hondred part, than he hadde doon bifoore ;  
 And right anon, this irous, curséd wrecche  
 Léet this knyghtés sone bifoore hym fecche,  
 Comandyng hym he sholde bifoore hym stonde ;  
 And sodeynly he took his bowe in honde, 2066  
 And up the streng he pulléd to his ere,  
 And with an arwe he slow the child right there.  
 ' Now, wheither have I a siker hand or noon ?'  
 Quod he ; ' is al my myght and mynde agon ? 2070  
 Hath wyn byrevéd me myne eyen sight ?'  
 What sholde I tellé thanswere of the knyght ?  
 His sone was slayn, ther is namoore to seye.  
 Beth war, therfore, with lordés how ye pleye.  
 Syngeth *Placebo*,—and I shal if I kan, 2075  
 But if it be unto a pouré man.  
 To a poure man men sholde hise vices telle,  
 But nat to a lord, thogh he sholde go to helle.  
 " Lo, irous Cirus, thilké Percien,  
 How he destroyed the ryver of Gysen, 2080  
 For that an hors of his was dreynt ther-inne,  
 Whan that he wenté Babiloigne to wynne.  
 He madé that the ryver was so smal  
 That wommen myghté wade it over al.

2062. *doon*, om. F.2071. *byrevéd*, E *bireft*.2079. *Cirus*, see Herodotus, Bk.i. and Seneca, *De Ira*,  
both of whom call the  
river Gyndes.2081. *dreynt*, drowned.

"Lo, what seyde he that so wel teché kan : 2085  
 'Ne be no felawe to an irous man,  
 Ne with no wood man walké by the weye,  
 Lest thee repente,'—ther is namoore to seye."

"Now, Thomas, leevé brother, lef thyn ire,  
 Thou shalt me fynde as just as is a squyre ; 2090  
 Hoold nat the develes knyf ay at thyn herte,—  
 Thyn angre dooth thee al to sooré smerte,—  
 But shewe to me al thy confessioun."

"Nay," quod the siké man, "by Seint Symoun !  
 I have be shryven this day at my curat ; 2095  
 I have hym toold hoolly al myn estat.  
 Nedeth namoore to speken of it, seith he,  
 But if me list, of myn humylitee."

"Gif me thanne of thy gold, to make oure  
 cloystre,"  
 Quod he, "for many a muscle and many an oystre,  
 Whan othere men han ben ful wel at eyse, 2101  
 Hath been oure foode, our cloystre for to reyse ;  
 And yet, God woot, unnethe the fundement  
 Parfournéd is, ne of our pavément  
 Nys nat a tyl yet withinne oure wones,— 2105  
 By God, we owen fourty pound for stones !

"Now help, Thomas ! for hym that harwed  
 helle,  
 For ellés mosté we oure bookés selle ;  
 And if ye lakke oure predicacioun

2091-92. H reverses these lines.

2095. *at*, H *of*.

2099. *gold*, H *good*.

2102. *for to reyse*, H *to arreyse*.

2105. *wones*, dwelling.

2107. *harwed*, harrowed, devastated.

Thanne goth the world al to destruccioun. 2110  
 For whoso wolde us fro this world bireve,  
 So God me savè, Thomas, by youre leve,  
 He wolde bireve out of this world the sonne ;  
 For who kan teche, and werchen, as we konne ?  
 And that is nat of litel tyme," quod he, 2115  
 " But syn that Elie was, or Elise,  
 Han frerès been,—that fynde I of record :  
 In charitee y-thanked be oure Lord !  
 Now, Thomas, helpe for seintè charitee !"  
 And doun anon he sette hym on his knee. 2120

This sikè man wax wel ny wood for ire ;  
 He woldè that the frere had been on fire  
 Wìth his false dissymulacioun.

" Swich thyng as is in my possessioun,"  
 Quod he, " that may I geven, and noon oother. 2125  
 Ye sey me thus, 'that I am yourè brother' ?"

" Ye, certès," quod the frere, " trusteth weel,  
 I took oure dame oure lettre and oure seel."

" Now wel," quod he, " and somewhat shal I geve  
 Unto youre hooly covent whil I lyve, 2130  
 And in thyn hand thou shalt it have anon,  
 On this condicioun, and oother noon ;  
 That thou departe it so, my leevè brother,  
 That every frere have also muche as oother ;  
 This shaltou swere on thy professioun, 2135  
 Withouten fraud or cavillacioun."

" I swere it," quod this frerè, " by my feith !"

2116. *Elie, E Ennok.*

2120. *And doun, H<sup>3</sup> Adoun.*

2133. *leeve, H<sup>6</sup> deere.*

2137. *by, H<sup>6</sup> upon.*

And therewithal his hand in his he leith,—

“Lo heer my feith, in me shal be no lak.”

“Now thanne put in thyn hand down by my  
bak,” 2140

Seydè this man, “and gropè wel bihynde ;

Bynethè my buttock ther shaltow fynde

A thyng that I have hyd in pryvetee.”

“A !” thoghte this frere, “this shal go with  
me !”

And doun his hand he launcheth to the clifte, 2145

In hope for to fyndè there a gifte ;

And whan this sikè man feltè this frere

Aboute his tuwel gropè there and heere,

Amydde his hand he leet the frere a fart ;

Ther nys no capul drawynge in a cart 2150

That myghte have lete a fart of swich a soun.

The frere up stirte, as dooth a wood leoun,—

“A ! falsè cherl,” quod he, “for Goddès bones !

This hastow for despit doon for the nones ;

Thou shalt abyge this fart, if that I may !” 2155

His meynee, whiche that herden this affray,

Cam lepynge in, and chacèd out the frere ;

And forth he gooth with a ful angry cheere,

And fette his felawe, ther as lay his stoor.

He lookèd as it were a wildè boor,— 2160

He gryntè with his teeth, so was he wrooth ;

A sturdy paas doun to the court he gooth,

Wher as ther woned a man of greet honour,

2150. *capul*, nag.

2159. *fette*, fetched.

2162. *court*, E. *lordes court*.

2163. *ther*, om. E.

To whom that he was alwey confessour ;  
 This worthy man was lord of that village. 2165  
 This freré cam as he were in a rage,  
 Where as this lord sat etyng at his bord ;  
 Unnethés myghte the freré speke a word,  
 Til atté laste he seyde, "God yow see!"

This lord gan looke and seide, "Benedicitee !  
 What, freré John, what maner world is this ? 2171  
 I se wel that som thyng ther is amys ;  
 Ye looken as the wode were ful of thevys ;  
 Sit doun anon, and tel me what youre grief is,  
 And it shal been amended if I may." 2175

"I have," quod he, "had a despit this day,  
 God yeldé yow ! adoun in youre village,  
 That in this world is noon so poure a page,  
 That he nolde have abhomynacioun  
 Of that I have receyved in youre toun ; 2180  
 And yet ne greveth me no thyng so soore,  
 As that this oldé cherl, with loppés hoore,  
 Blaspheméd hath oure hooly covent eke."

"Now, maister," quod this lord, "I yow bi-  
 seke"—

"No 'maister,' sire," quod he, "but servitour,  
 Thogh I have had in scolé swich honour ; 2186  
 God liketh nat that 'Raby' men us calle,  
 Neither in market ne in youre largé halle."

"No fors," quod he, "but tel me al youre grief."

2170. *gan*, E *bigan to*.

2172. *se wel that som*, E *trouve*  
*som maner*.  
*ther*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

2175. *if*, EH<sup>4</sup> *if that*.

2181. *ne*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

2185. *sire*, om. E<sup>4</sup>.

2189. *No fors*, no matter.

"Sire," quod this frere, "an odious meschief  
This day bityd is to myn ordre and me ; 2191  
And so *par consequens* in ech degree  
Of hooly chirché ; God amende it soone !"

"Sire," quod the lord, "ye woot what is to  
doone ;  
Distempre yow noght, ye be my confessour ; 2195  
Ye been the salt of the erthe and the savour ;  
For Goddès love youre pacience ye holde ;  
Tel me youre grief ;" and he anon hym tolde,  
As ye han herd biforn, ye woot wel what.

The lady of the hous al stillè sat 2200  
Til she had herdè what the frerè sayde ;  
"Ey ! Goddès mooder," quod she, — "blisful  
mayde !

Is ther oght ellès ? Telle me feithfully."

"Madame," quod he, "how thynkè ye here-  
by ?"

"How that me thynketh ?" quod she ; "so  
God me speede ! 2205

I seye, a cherle hath doon a cherlès dede.  
What sholde I seye ? God lat hym nevere thee,  
His sikè heed is ful of vanytee ;  
I holde hym in a manere frenèsye."

"Madame," quod he, "by God I shal nat lye,  
But I on oother wise may be awreke, 2211  
I shal disclaundre hym, over al ther I speke,—

2190. *this frere*, om. E.

2201. *herdè*, EH<sup>4</sup> *herd*.

2207. *thee*, thrive.

2211. *on oother wise*, etc., E *on  
hym oother weyes be  
wreke*.

This falsè blasphemour that chargèd me  
 To partè that wol nat departed be,—  
 To every man ylichè, with meschaunce !” 2215

The lord sat stille, as he were in a traunce,  
 And in his herte he rollèd up and doun  
 “How hadde the cherl ymaginacioun,  
 To shewè swich a probleme to the frere ?  
 Nevere erst er now herd I of swich mateere ; 2220  
 I trowe the devel putte it in his mynde.

In ars-metrikè shal ther no man fynde,  
 Biforn this day of swich a questioun.  
 Certès, it was a shrewed conclusioun,  
 That every man sholde have yliche his part, 2225  
 As of the soun or savour of a fart.

O vilè proudè cherl ! I shrewe his face !  
 Lo, sirès,” quod the lord, with hardè grace,  
 “Who herd evere of swich a thyng er now ?  
 ‘To every man ylikè,’—tel me how ? 2230

It is an impossible, it may nat be.  
 Ey, nycè cherl ? God lete thee nevere thee !  
 The rumblyng of a fart, and every soun,  
 Nis but of eir reverberacioun,  
 And evere it wasteth, litel and litel away. 2235  
 Ther is no man kan demen, by my fey !  
 If that it were departed equally.  
 What, lo, my cherl, lo, yet how shrewèdly,  
 Unto my confessour to day he spak ;

2218. *ymaginacioun*, E<sup>3</sup> *this ymaginacioun*.

2222. *ars-metrike*, arithmetic.

2224. H<sup>6</sup> read *who schulde make a demonstracioun*.

2227. *vile*, H<sup>6</sup> *nyce*.

I holde hym, certeyn, a demonyak. 2240  
 Now ete youre mete, and lat the cherl go pleye.  
 Lat hym go honge hymself a devel weye !”

*The wordes of the lordes Squier and his kervere for  
 departynge of the fart on twelve*

Now stood the lordes Squier at the bord,  
 That karf his mete, and herdé word by word  
 Of allé thyngés whiche that I have sayd ; 2245  
 “My lord,” quod he, “be ye nat yvele apayd,  
 I koudé tellé for a gowné-clooth  
 To yow, sire freré, so ye be nat wrooth,  
 How that this fart sholde evene y-deled be  
 Among youre covent, if it lykéd me.” 2250  
 “Tel,” quod the lord, “and thou shalt have  
 anon

A gowné-clooth, by God, and by Seint John !”  
 “My lord,” quod he, “whan that the weder is  
 fair,  
 Withouten wynd, or perturbynge of air,  
 Lat brynge a cartéwheel into this halle,— 2255  
 But looké that it have his spokés alle,—  
 Twelve spokés hath a cartwheel comunly ;  
 And bryng me thanne twelf frerés,—woot ye why ?  
 For thritten is a covent, as I gesse ;

2240. *certeyn a*, H<sup>1</sup> *certeynly*.

2246. *be ye*, E<sup>2</sup> *beth*.

2249. *sholde . . . y-deled be*, H  
*delt shal be*.

2255. *cartéwheel*, EH<sup>1</sup> *cart-  
 wheel*.

2259. *thritten* (thirteen), E<sup>2</sup>  
*twelve*.



The cónfessour heere, for his worthynesse, 2260  
 Shal parfourne up the nombre of his covent.  
 Thanne shal they knele doun, by oon assent,  
 And to every spokés ende, in this manere,  
 Ful sadly leye his nosé shal a frere.  
 Youre noble cónfessour there, God hym save ! 2265  
 Shal holde his nose upright under the nave.  
 Thanne shal this cherl, with bely stif, and toght  
 As any tabour, hyder been y-broght,  
 And sette hym on the wheel right of this cart,  
 Upon the nave, and make hym lete a fart, 2270  
 And ye shul seen, up peril of my lyf,  
 By preevé which that is demonstratif,  
 That equally the soun of it wol wende,  
 And eke the stynk, unto the spokés ende,—  
 Save that this worthy man, youre confessour, 2275  
 By cause he is a man of greet honour,  
 Shal have the firsté fruyt, as resoun is.  
 The noble usage of frerés yet is this,  
 The worthy men of hem shul first be served,—  
 And certainly, he hath it weel disserved, 2280  
 He hath to day taught us so muchel good  
 With prechyng in the pulpit ther he stood,  
 That I may vouchésauf, I sey for me,  
 He hadde the firsté smel of fartés thre,  
 And so wolde al the covent hardily, 2285  
 He bereth hym so faire and hoolily."

2268. *hyder been*, E<sup>3</sup> *been hyder*.

2272. *preve which*, H *verray*  
*proof*.

2278. *The noble . . . yet is*  
*this*, E *As yet the noble*  
*. . . is*.

The lord, the lady, and alle men save the frere,  
Seyden that Jankyn spak in this matere  
As wel as Euclide, or Protholomee :  
Touchynge this cherl they seyden subtiltee      2290  
And heigh wit made hym speken as he spak ;  
He nys no fool, ne no demonyak ;  
And Jankyn hath y-wonne a newe gowne.  
My tale is doon,—we been almoost at towne.

2289. *Protholomee*, Ptolemy.2294. *at towne*, Sittingbourne.

## GROUP E

### *Heere folweth The Prologe of the Clerkes Tale of Oxenford*

"SIRE Clerk of Oxenford," oure Hosté sayde,  
 "Ye ryde as coy and stille as dooth a mayde,  
 Were newè spouséd, sittynge at the bord ;  
 This day ne herd I of youre tonge a word.  
 I trowe ye studie abouté som sophyme ; 5  
 But Salomon seith 'every thyng hath tyme.'  
 For Goddés sake ! as beth of better cheere !  
 It is no tymé for to studien heere ;  
 Telle us som myrie talé, by youre fey !  
 For what man that is entred in a pley, 10  
 He nedès moot unto the pley assente ;  
 But precheth nat, as frerès doon in lente,  
 To make us for oure oldé synnès wepe,  
 Ne that thy talé make us nat to slepe.  
 'Telle us som murie thyng of áventúres,— 15  
 Youré termès, youré colóurs, and youré figúres  
 Keepe hem in stoor til so be ye endite  
 Heigh style, as whan that men to kyngès write ;

5. *sophyme*, problem.

16. *colours*, ornaments of style.

17. *so be*, EH *so be that*.

Speketh so pleyn at this tyme, we yow preye,  
That we may understande what ye seye." 20

This worthy clerk benignely answerde,  
"Hoste," quod he, "I am under youre yerde,  
Ye han of us, as now, the governance,  
And therefor wol I do yow obeisance  
As fer as resoun axeth hardily. 25

I wol yow telle a talé which that I  
Lernéd at Padwé of a worthy clerk,  
As prevéd by his wordés and his werk ;  
He is now deed and nayléd in his cheste,  
I prey to God so geve his soulé reste ! 30

"Fraunceys Petrak, the lauriat poete,  
Highte this clerk whos rethoriké sweete  
Enlumyned al Ytaille of poetrie,—  
As Lynyan dide of philosophie,  
Or lawe, or oother art particuler,— 35  
But deeth, that wol nat suffre us dwellen heer,  
But as it were a twynklyng of an eye,  
Hem bothe hath slayn, and allé shul we dye.  
But forth to tellen of this worthy man  
That taughte me this tale, as I bigan, 40  
I seye that first with heigh stile he enditeth,  
Er he the body of his talé writeth,  
A prohemye, in the which discryveth he

22. *Hoste*, H *Sir host*.

27. *Lerned at Padwe*, Petrarch  
was at Arquà, near  
Padua, from Jan. to  
Sept. 1373, and Chaucer  
may easily have visited

him on his Genoese  
mission of that year.

29. *deed*, Petrarch died in 1374.

34. *Lynyan*, an Italian jurist,  
who died in 1383.

36. *suffre us*, om. E.

Pemond, and of Salucés the contree ;  
 And speketh of Apennyn, the hillés hye 45  
 That been the boundés of West Lumbardye,  
 And of Mount Vesulus in special,  
 Where as the Poo out of a wellè smal  
 Taketh his firsté spryngyng and his sours,  
 That estward ay encresseth in his cours 50  
 To Emeleward, to Ferrare and Venyse,—  
 The which a longe thyng werè to devyse,  
 And trewély, as to my juggément,  
 Me thynketh it a thyng impertinent,  
 Save that he wole convoyen his mateere ; 55  
 But this is his talé which that ye may heere.”

### CLERK OF OXFORD'S TALE

#### *Heere bigynneth The Tale of the Clerk of Oxenford*

#### PART I

Ther is, at the West sydé of Ytaille,  
 Doun at the roote of Vesulus the colde,  
 A lusty playne, habundant of vitaille,

44. *Pemond*, Piedmont.  
*Saluces*, Saluzzo.  
 47. *Mount Vesulus*, monte Viso.  
 51. *To Emeleward*, i.e. towards the district traversed by the old *Via Aemiliana*.  
 55. *convoyen his mateere*, convey his information.  
 56. *this is*, E<sup>2</sup> *this*.

*The Tale of the Clerk*, this is for the most part a close rendering of the Latin version of the Tale of Griselda, written by Petrarch after reading Boccaccio's story in the *Decamerone*. E and Hengwrt frequently quote the Latin text in side notes. Chaucer's chief departures from Petrarch are pointed out in the notes.

Where many a tour and toun thou mayst biholde 60  
 That founded were in tyme of fadrès olde,  
 And many another delitáble sighte,  
 And Salucés this noble contree highte.

A markys whilom lord was of that lond,  
 As were hise worthy eldrès hym bifore, 65  
 And obeisant and redy to his hond  
 Were alle hise ligés, bothé lasse and moore.  
 Thus in delit he lyveth, and hath doon yoore,  
 Biloved and drad, thurgh favour of Fortune,  
 Bothe of hise lordès and of his commune. 70

Therwith he was, to speke as of lynage,  
 The gentilleste y-born of Lumbardye ;  
 A faire persone, and strong, and yong of age,  
 And ful of honour and of curteisye ;  
 Discreet ynogh his contree for to gye,— 75  
 Save in somme thyngés that he was to blame,—  
 And Walter was this yongé lordès name.

I blame him thus, that he considered noght  
 In tyme comynge what hym myghte bityde ;

70. *commune*, commons.

75. *gye*, guide.

76. *Save*, E *Save that*.

78. *considered*, E<sup>3</sup> *considereth*.  
 We may quote the original of this stanza to show how close Chaucer keeps to his text : " vir

insignis nisi quod, præsentì sua sorte contentus, incuriosissimus futurorum erat. Itaque venatui aucupioque deditus sic illis incubuerat ut alia pene cuncta negligeret ; quodque in primis ægre populi ferebant ab ipsis quoque conjugii consiliis abhorreret."

But in his lust present was al his thoght, 80  
 As for to hauke and hunte on every syde,  
 Wel ny alle othere curés leet he slyde ;  
 And eek he nolde, and that was worst of alle,  
 Weddè no wyf, for noght that may bifalle.

Oonly that point his peplè bar so soore 85  
 That flokmeele on a day they to hym wente,  
 And oon of hem that wisest was of loore,—  
 Or ellès that the lord best wolde assente  
 That he sholde telle hym what his peplè mente,  
 Or ellès koude he showe wel swich mateere,— 90  
 He to the markys seyde as ye shul heere :

“ O noble markys, youre humanitee  
 Asseureth us and geveth us hardinesse  
 As ofte as tyme is of necessitee  
 That we to yow mowe telle oure hevynesse. 95  
 Accepteth, lord, now for youre gentillesse,  
 That we with pitous herte unto yow pleyne,  
 And lat youre erès nat my voys desdeyne.

Al have I noght to doone in this mateere  
 Moore than another man hath in this place, 100  
 Yet for as muche as ye, my lord so deere,  
 Han alwey shewed me favour and grace,  
 I dar the bettrè aske of yow a space

86. *fokmeele*, 'catervatim,' in a crowd.

93. *and geveth*, E *to geve*.

Of audience, to shewen oure requeste,  
And ye, my lord, to doon right as yow leste ; 105

For certès, lord, so wel us liketh yow  
And al youre werk, and evere han doon, that we  
Ne koudé nat us-self devysen how  
We myghté lyven in moore felicitee,  
Save o thyng, lord, if it youre willé be, 110  
That for to been a wedded man yow leste ;  
Thanne were youre peple in sovereyn hertès reste.

Boweth youre nekke under that blisful yok  
Of soveraynètee, noght of servyse,  
Which that men clepeth spousaille or wedlok, 115  
And thenketh, lord, among youre thoghtés wyse,  
How that oure dayés passe in sondry wyse,  
For thogh we slepe, or wake, or rome, or ryde  
Ay fleeth the tyme, it nyl no man abyde ;

And thogh youre grené youthé floure as yit, 120  
In crepeth age alwey, as stille as stoon,  
And Deeth manaceth every age and smyt  
In ech estaat, for ther escapeth noon ;  
And al so certein as we knowe echoon  
That we shul deye, as uncerteyn we alle 125  
Been of that day whan deeth shal on us falle.

105. *to doon right as yow leste*,  
not in the Latin.

113. Chaucer here transfers  
Petrarch's epithets: "col-

lumque non liberum  
modo sed imperiosum  
legitimo subjicias jugo"  
is the Latin.

122. *smyt*, smiteth.



"Accepteth thanne of us the trewe entente  
 That nevere yet refuseden thyn heeste,  
 And we wol, lord, if that ye wole assente,  
 Chese yow a wyf in short tyme attē leeste, 130  
 Born of the gentilleste and of the meeste  
 Of al this land, so that it oghtē seme  
 Honour to God and yow, as we kan deeme.

Deliver us out of al this bisy drede,  
 And taak a wyf, for hyē Goddēs sake ; 135  
 For if it so bifelle, as God forbede !  
 That thurgh youre deeth youre lynē sholdē slake,  
 And that a straungē sūccessour sholde take  
 Your heritage, O, wo were us alyve !  
 Wherefore we pray you hastily to wyve." 140

Hir meekē preyere, and hir pitous cheere,  
 Madē the markys hertē han pitee.  
 "Ye wol," quod he, "myn owēne peplē deere,  
 To that I nevere erst thoughtē streynē me.  
 I me rejoysēd of my libertee, 145  
 That seeldē tyme is founde in mariage ;  
 Ther I was free, I moot been in servage ;

But nathēlees, I se youre trewe entente,  
 And trust upon youre wit, and have doon ay ;  
 Wherefore, of my free wyl, I wole assente 150  
 To weddē me as soone as evere I may.

131. *meeste*, most (important).137. *lyne*, H<sup>4</sup> *lynage*.144. *streynē*, H *constreigne*.

But ther as ye han profréd me this day  
 To chesé me a wyf, I yow relese  
 That choys, and prey yow of that profré cesse,

For, God it woot, that children ofté been 155  
 Unlyk hir worthy eldrés hem bifore ;  
 Bountee comth al of God, nat of the streen  
 Of which they been engendred and y-bore.  
 I truste in Goddés bontee, and therfore  
 My mariage, and myn estaat and reste, 160  
 I hym bitake,—he may doon as hym leste.

Lat me allone in chesyng of my wyf—  
 That charge upon my bak I wole endure ;  
 But I yow preye, and charge upon youre lyf,  
 That what wyf that I take, ye me assure 165  
 To worshiþe hire, whil that hir lyf may dure,  
 In word and werk, bothe heere and everywheere,  
 As she an emperourés doghter weere ;

And forthermoore, this shal ye swere, that ye  
 Agayn my choys shul neither grucche ne stryve ;  
 For sith I shal forgoon my libertee 171  
 At youre requeste, as evere moot I thryve !  
 Ther as myn herte is set, ther wol I wyve ;  
 And, but ye wole assente in this manere,  
 I prey yow speketh namoore of this matere." 175

154. *yow*, om. E.

157. *streen*, strain, stock.

161. *bitake*, entrust to.

166. *dure*, last.

170. *neither*, H<sup>3</sup> *never*.  
*grucche*, grumble.

174. *And but ye wole*, etc., not  
 in Latin.

With hertely wyl they sworn and assenten ;  
To al this thyng, ther seyde no wight nay ;  
Bisekyngge hym of grace, er that they wenten,  
That he wolde graunten hem a certein day  
Of his spousaille, as soone as evere he may ; 180  
For yet alwey the peplé somwhat dredde  
Lest that this markys no wyf woldé wedde.

He graunten hem a day, swich as hym leste,  
On which he wolde be wedded sikerly,  
And seyde he dide al this at hir requeste ; 185  
And they, with humble ententé, buxomly,  
Knelynge upon hir knees ful reverently,  
Hym thonken alle ; and thus they han an ende  
Of hire entente, and hoom agayn they wende.

And heer-upon he to hise officerés 190  
Comaundeth for the festé to purveye ;  
And to hise privee knyghtés and squierés  
Swich chargé gaf as hym liste on hem leye ;  
And they to his comandément obeye,  
And ech of hem dooth al his diligence 195  
To doon unto the feesté reverence.

## PART II

Noght fer fro thilké paleys honorable  
Ther as this markys shoope his mariage,  
There stood a throop, of sité delitable,

186. *entente*, H *hert ful*.198. *shoope*, planned.

In which that pouré folk of that village      200  
 Hadden hir beestés and hir herbergage,  
 And of hire labour tooke hir sustenance,  
 After the erthé gaf hem habundance.

Among thise pouré folk ther dwelte a man  
 Which that was holden pourest of hem alle,—      205  
 But hyé God som tymé senden kan  
 His grace into a litel oxés stalle ;  
 Janicula, men of that throope hym calle ;  
 A doghter hadde he fair ynogh to sighte,  
 And Grisildis this yongé mayden highte.      210

But for to speke of vertuous beautee  
 Thanne was she oon the faireste under sonne,  
 For pouréliche y-fostred up was she ;  
 No likerous lust was thurgh hire herte y-ronne,  
 Wel ofter of the welle than of the tonne      215  
 She drank, and for she woldé vertu plese  
 She knew wel labour, but noon ydel ese.

But thogh this maydé tendre were of age,  
 Yet in the brest of hire virginitee  
 Ther was enclosed rype and sad corage,      220  
 And in greet reverence and charitee  
 Hir oldé, pouré fader fostred shee ;  
 A fewé sheepe, spynnyng, on feeld she kepte,  
 She woldé noght been ydel til she slepte.

201. *herbergage*, lodging.

203. *After*, E<sup>3</sup> *After that*.

204. *Among*, E<sup>3</sup> *Amonges*.

215-220. Chaucer's addition.

215. *tonne*, tun, cask.

And whan she homward cam she woldé brynge  
Wortés, or othere herbés, tymés ofte, 226  
The whiche she shredde and seeth for hir lyvyng,  
And made hir bed ful harde and no thyng softe ;  
And ay she kepte hir fadres lyf on-lofte,  
With everich obeisaunce and diligence 230  
That child may doon to fadres reverence.

Upon Grisilde, this pouré créature,  
Ful ofté sithe this markys caste his eye  
As he on huntyng rood paráventure ;  
And, whan it fil that he myghte hire espye, 235  
He noght with wantowne lookyng of folye  
Hise eyén caste on hire, but in sad wyse  
Upon hir chiere he gan hym ofte avyse,

Commendynge in his herte hir wommanhede,  
And eek hir vertu, passynge any wight 240  
Of so yong age, as wel in chiere as dede ;  
For thogh the peplé have no greet insight  
In vertu, he considered ful right  
Hir bountee, and disposéd that he wolde  
Wedde hire oonly, if evere he weddè sholde. 245

The day of weddyng cam, but no wight kan  
Tellé what womman that it sholdé be ;  
For which merveillé wondred many a man,  
And seyden, whan they were in privétee,

235. *whan*, E *whan that*.  
242. *have*, E *hadde*.

249-252. Chaucer's addition.  
249. *whan*, E *whan that*.

"Wol nat oure lord yet leve his vanytee? 250  
Wol he nat wedde? allas ! allas ! the while !  
Why wole he thus hymself and us bigile ?"

But nathélees this markys hath doon make,  
Of gemmés set in gold and in asure,  
Broochés and ryngés, for Grisildis sake ; 255  
And of hir clothyng took he the mesure  
Bý a mayde lyke to hire of stature,  
And eek of othere aornementés alle  
That unto swich a weddyng sholdé falle.

The time of undren of the samé day 260  
Approcheth, that this weddyng sholdé be,  
And al the paleys put was in array,  
Bothe halle and chambrés, ech in his degree ;  
Houses of office stufféd with plentee,  
Ther maystow seen of deyntéuous vitaille 265  
That may be founde as fer as last Ytaille.

This roial markys richély arrayed,  
Lordés and ladyes in his compaignye,  
The whiche that to the feesté weren y-prayed,  
And of his retenue the bachelrye, 270  
With many a soun of sondry melodye,  
Unto the village of the which I tolde,  
In this array the righté wey han holde.

257. *of*, om. E<sup>8</sup>.260. *undren*, between 9 and 12 A.M.

263-266. Chaucer's addition.

266. *last*, lasteth, reaches.267. *richely*, H<sup>2</sup> *really*  
(royally).

Grisilde of this, God woot, ful innocent  
That for hire shapen was al this array, 275  
To fecchen water at a welle is went,  
And cometh hoom as soone as ever she may ;  
For wel she hadde herd seyde that thilkè day  
The markys sholdè wedde, and if she myghte  
She woldè fayn han seyn som of that sighte. 280

She thoghte, " I wole with othere maydens stonde,  
That been my felawes, in oure dore and se  
The markysesse, and therfore wol I fonde  
To doon at hoom as soone as it may be  
The labour which that longeth unto me ; 285  
And thanne I may at leyser hire biholde  
If she this wey unto the castel holde."

And as she wolde over hir thressshfold gon  
The markys cam, and gan hire for to calle ;  
And she set doun hir water pot anon 290  
Biside the thressshfold in an oxès stalle,  
And doun upon hir knes she gan to falle,  
And with sad contenancè kneleth stille  
Til she had herd what was the lordès will.

This thoughtful markys spak unto this mayde 295  
Ful sobrelly, and seyde in this manere :  
" Where is youre fader, Grisildis ? " he sayde ;

281 *sqq.* The form of the soliloquy is Chaucer's.

290-294. Chaucer's addition.

297. *Grisildis*, E<sup>3</sup> *O Grisildis*.

And she with reverence, in humble cheere,  
Answerdè, " Lord, he is al redy heere ; "  
And in she gooth withouten lenger lette, 300  
And to the markys she hir fader fette.

He by the hand thanne took this oldè man,  
And seyde thus, whan he hym hadde asyde,  
" Janicula, I neither may ne kan  
Lenger the plesance of myn hertè hyde. 305  
If that thou vouchèsauf, what-so bityde,  
Thy doghter wol I take, er that I wende,  
As for my wyf unto hir lyvès ende.

Thou lovest me, I woot it wel certeyn,  
And art my feithful ligè man y-bore, 310  
And all that liketh me, I dar wel seyn.  
It liketh thee, and specially therfore,  
Tel me that poynt that I have seyde bifore,  
If that thou wolt unto that purpos drawe,  
To takè me as for thy sone-in-lawe." 315

This sodeyn cas this man astonyed so  
That reed he wax, abayst, and al quakyng  
He stood ; unnethès seyde he wordès mo,  
But oonly thus : " Lord," quod he, " my willynge  
Is as ye wole, ne ageyns youre likyng 320  
I wol no thyng, ye be my lord so deere ;  
Right as yow lust governeth this mateere."

313. *that I have seyde, H as ye have herd.*

317. *abayst, abashed.*



"Yet wol I," quod this markys softely,  
 "That in thy chambre, I, and thou, and she,  
 Have a collacioun, and wostow why? 325  
 For I wol axe if it hire willè be  
 To be my wyf, and reule hire after me ;  
 And al this shal be doon in thy presence,  
 I wol noght speke out of thyn audience."

And in the chambre whil they were aboute 330  
 Hir tretys, which as ye shal after heere,  
 The peple cam unto the hous with-oute,  
 And wondred hem in how honeste manere,  
 And tentify, she kepte hir fader deere ;  
 But outrèly Grisildis wondré myghte, 335  
 For nevere erst ne saugh she swich a sighte.

No wonder is thogh that she were astoned  
 To seen so greet a gest come in that place ;  
 She nevere was to swiché gestès woned,  
 For which she lookéd with ful palé face. 340  
 But, shortly forth this talé for to chace,  
 Thise arn the wordès that the markys sayde  
 To this benigné, verray, feithful mayde :

"Grisilde," he seyde, "ye shal wel understonde  
 It liketh to youre fader and to me 345  
 That I yow wedde ; and eek it may so stonde,

325. *collacioun*, a conference.334. *tentify*, H *tendurly*.335. *outrèly*, utterly.339. *woned*, accustomed.

340. Chaucer's addition.

341. *tale*, H<sup>6</sup> *matiere*.

As I suppose ye wol that it so be ;  
But thise demandés axe I first," quod he,  
"That sith it shal be doon in hastif wyse,  
Wol ye assente or ellés yow avyse ? 350

I seye this, be ye redy with good herte  
To al my lust, and that I frely may  
As me best thynketh do yow laughe or smerte,  
And nevere ye to grucche it nyght ne day ?  
And eek whan I sey 'ye' ne sey nat 'nay,' 355  
Neither by word, ne frownyng contenance ?  
Swere this, and heere I swere oure alliance."

Wondrynge upon this word, quakyng for drede,  
She seyde, "Lord, undigne and unworthy  
Am I to thilke honour that ye me beede ; 360  
But as ye wole youreself, right so wol I,  
And heere I swere that nevere willyngly  
In werk, ne thought, I nyl yow disobeye,  
For to be deed, though me were looth to deye !"

"This is ynogh, Grisildé myn," quod he, 365  
And forth he gooth with a ful sobré cheere  
Out at the dore, and after that cam she,  
And to the peple he seyde in this manere :  
"This is my wyf," quod he, "that standeth heere ;  
Honoureth hire, and loveth hire, I preye, 370  
Whoso me loveth ; ther is namoore to seye."

And for that no thyng of hir oldé geere  
 She sholdé brynge into his hous, he bad  
 That wommen sholde dispoillen hire right there ;  
 Of which thise ladyes weré nat right glad 375  
 To handle hir clothés wher-inne she was clad ;  
 But nathélees this maydé, bright of hewe,  
 Fro foot to heed they clothéd han al newe.

Hir heris han they kembd, that lay untressed  
 Ful rudely, and with hir fyngres smale 380  
 A corone on hire heed they han y-dressed,  
 And sette hire ful of nowches grete and smale.  
 Of hire array what sholde I make a tale ?  
 Unnethe the peple hire knew for hire fairnesse,  
 Whan she translated was in swich richesse. 385

This markys hath hire spoused with a ryng,  
 Brought for the samé cause, and thanne hire sette  
 Upon an hors snow-whit and wel amblyng,  
 And to his paleys, er he lenger lette,  
 With joyful peple that hire ladde and mette, 390  
 Convoyéd hire, and thus the day they spende  
 In revel til the sonné gan descende ;

And, shortly forth this talé for to chace,  
 I seye that to this newé markysesse  
 God hath swich favour sent hire of his grace, 395

375, 376. Chaucer here varies  
 needlessly from Petrarch.  
 382. *nowches*, jewels.

395. *swich favour*, H *schewed  
 favour and*.

That it ne seméd nat by liklynesse  
That she was born and fed in rudénesse,  
As in a cote, or in an oxé stalle,  
But norissed in an emperourés halle.

To every wight she woxen is so deere 400  
And worshipful, that folk ther she was bore,  
And from hire birthé knewe hire yeer by yeere,  
Unnethé trowéd they, but dorste han swore  
That to Janicle of which I spak bifore  
She doghter nere, for as by conjecture, 405  
Hem thoughte she was another créature ;

For though that evere vertuous was she,  
She was encresséd in swich excellence  
Of thewés goode, y-set in heigh bountee,  
And so discreet and fair of eloquence, 410  
So benigne, and so digne of reverence,  
And koudé so the peplés herte embrace,  
That ech hire lovede that looked on hir face.

Noght oonly of Saluces in the toun  
Publicéd was the bountee of hir name. 415  
But eek biside in many a regioun,  
If oon seide wel, another seyde the same.  
So spradde of hiré heighe bountee the fame  
That men and wommen, as wel yonge as olde,  
Goon to Saluce upon hire to bihold. 420

404. *That, E That she.*  
409. *thewes, virtues.*

415. *bountee, E beautee.*  
418. *fame, E name.*

Thus Walter lowely—nay, but roially—  
 Wedded with fortunat honestétee,  
 In Goddés pees lyveth ful esily  
 At hoom, and outward grace ynogh had he ;  
 And for he saugh that under lowe degree 425  
 Was ofté vertu hid, the peple hym heelde  
 A prudent man, and that is seyn ful seelde.

Nat oonly this Grisildis thurgh hir wit  
 Koude al the feet of wyfly homlynesse,  
 But eek, whan that the cas required it, 430  
 The commune profit koudé she redresse ;  
 Ther nas discord, rancour, ne hevynesse,  
 In al that land, that she ne koude apese,  
 And wisely brynge hem alle in reste and ese. 434

Though that hire housbonde absent were, anon,  
 If gentil men or othere of hire contree  
 Were wrothé, she wolde bryngen hem aton ;  
 So wise and rypé wordés haddé she,  
 And juggémentz of so greet equitee,  
 That she from hevene sent was, as men wende, 440  
 Peplé to save and every wrong tamende.

Nat longé tyme after that this Grisild  
 Was wedded, she a doghter hath y-bore,  
 Al had hire levere have born a knavé child.

425. *lowe*, E *heigh*.426. *ofte*, om. F.430. *cas*, H *tyme*.437. *aton*, together.444. *born*, H<sup>2</sup> *had*.

Glad was this markys and the folk therfore, 445  
 For though a maydē child coome al bifore,  
 She may unto a knavē child atteyne,  
 By liklihedē, syn she nys nat bareyne.

## PART III

Ther fil, as it bifalleth tymēs mo,  
 Whan that this child had soukēd but a throwe, 450  
 This markys in his hertē longeth so  
 To tempte his wyf, hir sadnesse for to knowe,  
 That he ne myghte out of his hertē throwe  
 This merveillous desir his wyf tassaye ; 454  
 Nedelees, God woot, he thoghte hire for taffraye.

He hadde assayēd hire ynogh bifore,  
 And foond hire evere goode,—what neded it  
 Hire for to tempte, and alwey moore and moore ?  
 Though som men preise it for a subtil wit,  
 But as for me, I seye that yvele it sit 460  
 To assaye a wyf whan that it is no nede,  
 And putten hire in angwyssh and in drede.

For which this markys wroghte in this manere ;  
 He cam allone a nyght, ther as she lay,  
 With stiernē face and with ful trouble cheere, 465  
 And seyde thus : " Grisilde," quod he, " that day

447. *knave*, E *man*.452. *sadnesse*, constancy.450. *a throwe*, a while.460. Chaucer is here much more  
 emphatic than Petrarch.

That I yow took out of youre povere array  
 And putte yow in estaat of heigh noblesse,—  
 Ye have nat that forgeten, as I gesse?

I seye, Grisilde, this present dignitee 470  
 In which that I have put yow, as I trowe,  
 Maketh yow nat forgetful for to be  
 That I yow took in poure estaat ful lowe ;  
 For any wele ye moot youreselven knowe ;  
 Taak heede of every word that I yow seye, 475  
 Ther is no wight that hereth it but we tweye.

Ye woot youreself wel how that ye cam heere  
 Into this hous, it is nat longe ago,  
 And though to me that ye be lief and deere,  
 Unto my gentils ye be no thyng so ; 480  
 They seyn to hem it is greet shame and wo  
 For to be subgetz, and been in servage,  
 To thee, that born art of a smal village ;

And namely sith thy doghter was y-bore  
 Thise wordés han they spoken, doutélees ; 485  
 But I desire, as I have doon bfore,  
 To lyve my lyf with hem in reste and pees ;  
 I may nat in this caas be recchélees,  
 I moot doon with thy doghter for the beste,  
 Nat as I wolde, but as my peplé leste ; 490

475. *I, E y.*482. *been, E to been.*488. *recchelees, careless.*

And yet, God woot, this is ful looth to me ;  
But nathélees withouté youre wityng  
I wol nat doon, but this wol I," quod he,  
"That ye to me assente, as in this thyng.  
Shewe now youre pacience in youre werkyng, 495  
That ye me highte and swore in youre village,  
That day that makéd was oure mariage."

Whan she had herd al this she noght ameved,  
Neither in word, or chiere, or countenaunce,  
For as it seméd she was nat agreved. 500  
She seyde, " Lord, al lyth in youre plesaunce ;  
My child and I, with hertely obeisaunce,  
Been yourés al, and ye mowe save or spille  
Youré owene thyng ; werketh after youre wille.

Ther may no thyng, God so my soulé save ! 505  
Likén to yow that may displesé me ;  
Ne I desiré no thyng for to have,  
Ne dredé for to leese, save oonly yee ;  
This wyl is in myn herte, and ay shal be.  
No lengthe of tyme, or deeth, may this deface, 510  
Ne chaunge my corage to another place."

Glad was this markys of hire answeyng,  
But yet he feynéd as he were nat so ;  
Al drery was his cheere and his lookyng,  
Whan that he sholde out of the chambré go. 515  
Soone after this, a furlong wey or two,

503. *or, E<sup>4</sup> and.*507. *desire, E<sup>2</sup> ne desire.*



He prively hath toold al his entent  
Unto a man, and to his wyf hym sente.

A maner sergeant was this privee man,  
The which that feithful ofte he founden hadde 520  
In thynges grete, and eek swich folk wel kan  
Doon executioun in thynges badde ;  
The lord knew wel that he hym loved and dradde :  
And whan this sergeant wiste his lordés wille,  
Into the chambre he stalked hym ful stille. 525

“ Madame,” he seyde, “ ye moote forgeve it me,  
Though I do thyng to which I am constreyned ;  
Ye been so wys, that ful wel knowe ye  
That lordés heestés mowe nat been y-feyned :  
They mowe wel been biwailléd and compleynéd,  
But men moote nede unto hire lust obeye, 531  
And so wol I ; ther is namoore to seye.

This child I am comanded for to take,”—  
And spak namoore but out the child he hente  
Despitously, and gan a cheeré make 535  
As though he wolde han slayn it er he wente.  
Grisildis moot al suffren and consente ;  
And as a lamb she sitteth meke and stille,  
And leet this crueel sergeant doon his wille.

Suspecious was the diffame of this man, 540  
Suspect his face, suspect his word also,

522. *in*, E *on*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *of*.

524. *his*, E *the*.

Suspect the tyme in which he this bigan ;  
 Allas, hir doghter that she lovèd so,  
 She wende he wolde han slawen it right tho ;  
 But nathélees she neither weepe ne syked, 545  
 Consentynge hire to that the markys lyked ;

But attè laste to speken she bigan,  
 And mekely she to the sergeant preyde,  
 So as he was a worthy gentil man,  
 That she moste kisse hire child er that it deyde. 550  
 And in hir barm this litel child she leyde  
 With ful sad face, and gan the child to blisse,  
 And lullèd it, and after gan it kisse ;

And thus she seyde in hire benigné voys,  
 "Fareweel, my child, I shal thee nevere see ! 555  
 But sith I thee have markèd with the croys,  
 Of thilké Fader, blessed moote he be,  
 That for us deyde up on a croys of tree.  
 Thy soulé, litel child, I hym bitake,  
 For this nyght shaltow dyen for my sake." 560

I trowe that to a norice in this cas  
 It had been hard this reuthé for to se ;  
 Wel myghte a mooder thanne han cryd, allas !

545. *syked*, sighed.

546. *Consentyng*, H<sup>6</sup> *Conform-  
yng*.

551. *barm*, bosom ; H *an hir  
arm*.

552, 553. *blisse . . . kisse*, E  
*kisse . . . blisse*.

554-560. Chaucer's addition,  
 though Petrarch men-  
 tions the signing with the  
 cross.

But natheless, so sad stidefast was she,  
 That she endured al adversitee, 565  
 And to the sergeant mekely she sayde,  
 "Have heer agayn youre litel yongé mayde ;

Gooth now," quod she, "and dooth my lordés  
 heeste ;

But o thyng wol I prey yow of youre grace,  
 That, but my lord forbad yow, atté leeste 570  
 Burieth this litel body in som place  
 That beestés, ne no briddés, it to-race ;"  
 But he no word wol to that purpos seye,  
 But took the child and wente upon his weye.

This sergeant cam unto his lord ageyn, 575  
 And of Grisildis wordés and hire cheere  
 He tolde hym point for point, in short and pleyn,  
 And hym presenteth with his doghter deere.  
 Somwhat this lord hath routhe in his manere,  
 But nathelees his purpos heeld he stille, 580  
 As lordés doon whan they wol han hir wille ;

And bad his sergeant that he pryvély  
 Sholdé this child ful softé wynde and wrappe  
 With allé circumstances, tendrely,  
 And carie it in a cofre, or in a lappe ; 585  
 But, upon peyne his heed of for to swappe,

564. *sad*, E<sup>2</sup> *sad and*.

567. This pretty line is Chau-  
 cer's addition.

569. *But*, E<sup>2</sup> *And*.

572. *to-race*, tear to pieces.

581. Chaucer's comment.

582. *his*, H *the* ; rest *this*.

586. *swappe*, strike.

That no man sholdé knowe of his entente,  
Ne whenne he cam, ne whider that he wente ;

But at Boloigné to his suster deere,  
That thilké tyme of Panik was countesse, 590  
He sholde it take, and shewe hire this mateere,  
Bisekyng hire to doon hire bisynesse  
This child to fostre in allé gentillesse ;  
And whos child that it was he bad hir hyde  
From every wight for oght that may bityde. 595

The sergeant gooth, and hath fulfild this thyng ;  
But to this markys now retourné we,  
For now gooth he ful faste ymaginyng  
If by his wyvès cheere he myghté se,  
Or by hire word aperceyvè, that she 600  
Were chaungéd ; but he nevere hire koudé fynde  
But evere in oon yliké sad and kynde,

As glad, as humble, as bisy in servyse,  
And eek in love, as she was wont to be,  
Was she to hym in every maner wyse ; 605  
Ne of hir doghter noght a word spak she.  
Noon accident for noon adversitee  
Was seyn in hire, ne nevere hir doghter name  
Ne nempnéd she, in ernest nor in game.

589. *Boloigne*, Bologna.

590. *Panik*, E<sup>s</sup> *Pavyk*, *Pavie* ;  
" Comiti de Panico " in  
Petrarch.

594. *hir*, E *kym*.

607-609. An unhappy trans-

lation of Petrarch's  
" nunquam siue ex pro-  
posito siue incidenter  
nomen eius ex ore ma-  
tris auditum."

609. *nempned*, named.

## PART IV

In this estaat ther passéd been foure yeer 610  
 Er she with childé was ; but, as God wolde,  
 A knavé child she bar by this Walter,  
 Ful gracious and fair for to biholde ;  
 And whan that folk it to his fader tolde,  
 Nat oonly he, but al his contree, merye 615  
 Was for this child, and God they thanke and  
 herye.

Whan it was two yeer old, and fro the brest  
 Departed of his norice, on a day  
 This markys caughté yet another lest  
 To tempte his wyf yet ofter, if he may. 620  
 O, nedelees was she tempted in assay !  
 But wedded men ne knowé no mesure  
 Whan that they fynde a pacient creature !

“Wyf,” quod this markys, “ye han herd er this  
 My peplé sikly berth oure mariage, 625  
 And namely sith my sone y-boren is,  
 Now is it worse than evere in al oure age.  
 The murmure sleeth myn herte and my corage ;  
 For to myne erés comth the voys so smerte  
 That it wel ny destroyed hath myn herte. 630

612. *knave*, E *man*.616. *herye*, praise.

621-623. Chaucer's comment.

625. *sikly berth*, take ill.626. *y-boren*, E<sup>d</sup> *y-born*, *boren*,  
etc.

"Now sey they thus : 'Whan Walter is agon  
Thanne shal the blood of Janicle succede,  
And been oure lord, for oother have we noon ;'  
Swiche wordés seith my peplé, out of drede,  
Wel oughte I of swich murmur taken heede, 635  
For certainly I dredé swich sentence,  
Though they nat pleyn speke in myn audience.

I woldé lyve in pees, if that I myghte,  
Wherfore I am disposéd outrèly,  
As I his suster servédé by nyghte, 640  
Right so thenke I to serve hym pryvèly.  
This warne I yow, that ye nat sodeynly  
Out of youreself for no wo sholde outreye—  
Beth pacient, and ther-of I yow preye."

"I have," quod she, "seyd thus, and evere shal,  
I wol no thyng, ne nyl no thyng certayn, 646  
But as yow list ; naught greveth me at al  
Though that my doughter and my sone be slayn  
At youre comandément ; this is to sayn,  
I have noght had no part of children tweyne, 650  
But first siknesse and after wo and peyne.

Ye been oure lord, dooth with youre owene thyng  
Right as yow list,—axeth no reed at me,  
For as I lefte at hoom al my clothyng  
Whan I first cam to yow, right so," quod she, 655

640. *servede*, E<sup>4</sup> *served*.643. *outraye*, pass beyond control.

" Lefte I my wyl, and al my libertee,  
 And took youre clothyng ; wherfore I yow preye,  
 Dooth youre plesaunce, I wol youre lust obeye.

And certès, if I haddè prescience  
 Youre wyl to knowe er ye youre lust me tolde, 660  
 I wolde it doon withouten necligence ;  
 But now I woot youre lust and what ye wolde,  
 Al youre plesancè ferme and stable I holde ;  
 For wiste I that my deeth wolde do yow ese,  
 Right gladly wolde I dyen yow to plesè ; 665

Deth may noght makè no comparisoun  
 Unto youre love ; " and whan this markys say  
 The constance of his wyf, he caste adoun  
 Hise eyen two, and wondreth that she may  
 In paciencè suffre al this array ; 670  
 And forth he goth with drery contenance,  
 But to his herte it was ful greet plesance.

This ugly sergeant, in the samè wyse  
 That he hire doghter caughtè, right so he,  
 Or worsè, if men worsè kan devyse, 675  
 Hath hent hire sone that ful was of beautee.  
 And evere in oon so pacient was she  
 That she no chierè maade of hevynesse,  
 But kiste hir sone, and after gan it blesse ;

667. *your*, Corp.<sup>2</sup> *our*, supported by Petrarch's  
 " nec mors ipsa nostro  
 fuerit par amori."

667. *say*, saw.  
 674. *caughte*, H *fette*.  
 676. *hent*, seized.  
 679. *it*, H<sup>2</sup> *him*.

Save this : she preydè hym, that, if he myghte, 680  
 Hir litel sone he wolde in erthè grave,  
 His tendré lymès, delicaat to sighte,  
 Fro fowelès and fro beestès for to save ;  
 But she noon answe're of hym myghtè have ;  
 He wente his wey, as hym nothyng ne roghte, 685  
 But to Boloigne he tendrely it broghte.

This markys wondred evere lenger the moore  
 Upon hir pacience, and if that he  
 Ne haddè soothly knowèn ther-bifoore  
 That parfitly hir children lovèd she, 690  
 He wolde have wend that of som subtiltee,  
 And of malice, or for crueel corage,  
 That she hadde suffréd this with sad visage ;

But wel he knew, that next hymself, certayn  
 She loved hir children best in every wyse. 695  
 But now of wommen wolde I axen fayn  
 If thise assayès myghtè nat suffise ?  
 What koude a sturdy housbonde moore devyse  
 To preeve hire wyfhod, or hir stedefastnesse,  
 And he continuynge evere in sturdinesse ? 700

But ther been folk of swich condicioun  
 That whan they have a certein purpos take,  
 They kan nat stynte of hire entencioun,

680. *that if*, H<sup>4</sup> *if that*.  
 683. *for*, H<sup>2</sup> *him*, Heng. *hem*.  
 685. *roghte*, recked.  
 692. *corage*, heart.

696. It is Chaucer who ad-  
 dresses the query to  
*women*.  
 699. *or*, H<sup>5</sup> *and*.



But, right as they were bounden to that stake,  
They wol nat of that firste purpos slake. 705  
Right so this markys fulliche hath purposed  
To tempte his wyf as he was first disposed.

He waiteth, if by word or contenance,  
That she to hym was changed of corage ;  
But nevere koude he fynde variance ; 710  
She was ay oon in herte and in visage,  
And ay the forther that she was in age  
The moore trewe, if that it were possible,  
She was to hym in love, and moore penyble ;

For which it semed thus that of hem two 715  
Ther nas but o wyl, for as Walter leste,  
The same lust was hire plesance also ;  
And, God be thanked, al fil for the beste.  
She shewed wel, for no worldly unreste  
A wyf, as of herself, no thing ne sholde 720  
Wille in effect, but as hir housbonde wolde.

The sclandre of Walter ofte and wyde spradde,  
That of a crueel herte he wikkedly,  
For he a poure womman wedded hadde,  
Hath mordred bothe his children prively. 725  
Swich murmure was among hem comunly.  
No wonder is, for to the peple ere  
Ther cam no word but that they mordred were ;

For which, where-as his peplé ther-bifore  
Hadde loved hym wel, the sclaundre of his diffame  
Made hem that they hym hatedé therfore. 731  
To been a mordrere is an hateful name,  
But nathélees, for ernest ne for game,  
He of his crueel purpos noldé stente ;  
To tempte his wyf was set al his entente. 735

Whan that his doghter twelf yeer was of age  
He to the court of Rome, in subtil wyse  
Enforméd of his wyl, sente his message,  
Comaundyng hem swiche bullés to devyse  
As to his crueel purpos may suffyse, 740  
How that the pope, as for his peplés reste,  
Bad hym to wedde another if hym leste.

I seye, he bad they sholdé countrefete  
The popés bullés, makynge mencioniun  
That he hath leve his firsté wyf to lete, 745  
As by the popés dispensacioun,  
To stynté rancour and dissencioun  
Bitwixe his peple and hym ; thus seyde the bulle,  
The which they han publicéd atté fulle.

The rudé peple, as it no wonder is, 750  
Wenden ful wel that it hadde be right so ;  
But whan thise tidynges cam to Grisildis  
I deemé that hire herté was ful wo ;

But she—yliké sad for everemo—  
 Disposéd was, this humble creäture 755  
 The adversitee of Fortune al tendure,

Abidyng evere his lust and his plesance  
 To whom that she was geven herte and al,  
 As to hire verray worldly suffisance.

But, shortly if this storie I tellen shal, 760  
 This markys writen hath in special  
 A lettre, in which he sheweth his entente,  
 And secreely he to Boloigne it sente.

To the erl of Panyk, which that haddé tho  
 Wedded his suster, preyde he specially 765  
 To bryngen hoom agayn hise children two  
 In honorable estaat al openly ;  
 But o thyng he hym preyède outrely,  
 That he to no wight, though men wolde enquire,  
 Sholdé nat tellé whos children they were 770

But seye, the mayden sholde y-wedded be  
 Unto the markys of Saluce anon.

And as this erl was preyéd, so dide he ;  
 For at day set he on his wey is goon  
 Toward Saluce, and lordés many oon 775  
 In riche array, this mayden for to gyde,  
 Hir yongé brother ridyng hire bisyde.

754. *sad*, constant ; Petrarch's  
 "inconcussa."

756. *tendure*, to endure.

764. *Panyk*, E<sup>3</sup> *Pavyk*, *Pavie*.

768. *outruly*, utterly.

770. *they*, E<sup>4</sup> *that they*.

777. *hire bisyde*, H<sup>b</sup> *by hir syde*.

Arrayéd was toward hir mariage  
This fressshé maydé ful of gemmés cleere.  
Hir brother, which that seven yeer was of age, 780  
Arrayéd eek ful fresssh in his manere ;  
And thus in greet noblesse and with glad cheere,  
Toward Saluces shapyngé hir journey,  
Fro day to day they ryden in hir wey.

## PART V

Among al this, after his wikke usage, 785  
This markys, yet his wyf to tempté moore,  
Tó the outtresté preeve of hir corage,  
Fully to han experience and loore  
If that she were as stidefast as bifoore,  
He on a day, in open audience, 790  
Ful boistously hath seyde hire this sentence :

“ Certés, Grisilde, I hadde ynogh plesance  
To han yow to my wyf for youre goodnesse,  
As for youre trouthe and for youre obeisance,  
Noght for youre lynage, ne for youre richesse : 795  
But now knowe I in verray soothfastnesse  
That in greet lordshipe, if I wel avyse,  
Ther is greet servitude, in sondry wyse.

I may nat doon as every plowman may,—  
My peplé me constreyneth for to take 800

Another wyf, and crien day by day,  
 And eek the pope, rancour for to slake,  
 Consenteth it, that dar I undertake ;  
 And trewëliche thus muche I wol yow seye,  
 My newè wyf is comynge by the weye. 805

Be strong of herte, and voyde anon hir place,  
 And thilké doweré that ye broghten me,  
 Taak it agayn, I graunte it of my grace.  
 Retourneth to youre fadrès hous," quod he,  
 "No man may alwey han prosperitee. 810  
 With evene herte I redé yow tendure  
 This strook of Fortune or of áventure."

And she answerde agayn in pacience :  
 "My lord," quod she, "I woot and wiste alway  
 How that bitwixen youre magnificence 815  
 And my poverté no wight kan ne may  
 Maken comparisoun, it is no nay ;  
 I ne heeld me nevere digne in no manere  
 To be youre wyf, no, ne youre chamberere ;

And in this hous ther ye me lady maade, 820  
 The heighé God take I for my witnesse,  
 And also wysly he my soulé glaade !  
 I nevere heeld me lady, ne maistresse,

808. *I graunte it of my grace*,  
 Petrarch only has "dotem  
 tuam referens."

811, 812. Chaucer's expansion  
 of "æqua mente."

813. *answerde agayn*, H<sup>5</sup> *agayn  
 answerde*.

818. *digne*, worthy.

819. *chamberere*, E<sup>3</sup> *chambre*.

But humble servant to youre worthynesse,  
 And evere shal, whil that my lyf may dure, 825  
 Aboven every worldly creäture.

That ye so longe, of youre benignitee,  
 Han holden me in honour and nobleye,  
 Where as I was noght worthy for to bee,  
 That thonke I God, and yow, to whom I preye  
 Foryelde it yow ; ther is namoore to seye ; 831  
 Unto my fader gladly wol I wende  
 And with hym dwelle unto my lyvès ende.

Ther I was fostrèd of a child ful smal,  
 Til I be deed my lyf ther wol I lede, 835  
 A wydwe clene, in body, herte and al ;  
 For sith I gaf to yow my maydenhede,  
 And am youre trewè wyf, it is no drede,  
 God shildè swich a lordès wyf to take  
 Another man to housbonde or to make ; 840

And of youre newè wyf God of his grace  
 So grauntè yow wele and prosperitee ;  
 For I wol gladly yelden hire my place,  
 In which that I was blisful wont to bee ;  
 For sith it liketh yow, my lord," quod shee, 845  
 " That whilom weren al myn hertès reste,  
 That I shal goon, I wol goon whan yow leste.

829. *for to*, om. E.

831. *Foryelde*, repay.

836-840. Expanded from Pet-

rarch's "Felix semper et  
 honorabilis vidua, quæ  
 viri talis uxor fuerim."

839. *shilde*, forbid.

But ther as ye me profré swich dowaire  
As I first broghte, it is wel in my mynde  
It were my wrecchéd clothés, no thyng faire, 850  
The wiche to me were hard now for to fynde.  
O goodé God, how gentil and how kynde  
Ye seméd by youre speche and youre visage  
The day that makéd was oure mariage !

But sooth is seyð, algate I fynde it trewe, 855  
For in effect it preevèd is on me,  
Love is noght oold as whan that it is newe !  
But certés, lord, for noon adversitee,  
To dyen in the cas, it shal nat bee  
That evere in word or werk I shal repente 860  
That I yow gaf myn herte in hool entente.

My lord, ye woot that in my fadrès place  
Ye dide me streepe out of my pouré weede,  
And richély me cladden of youre grace.  
To yow broghte I noght ellès, out of drede, 865  
But feith and nakednesse and maydenhede ;  
And heere agayn my clothyng I restoore,  
And eek my weddyng ryng, for everemore.

The remenant of youre jueles redy be  
In-with youre chambré, dar I saufly sayn. 870  
Naked out of my fadrès hous," quod she,  
"I cam and naked moot I turne agayn ;

853-860. Chaucer's addition. 854. *The day*, H *That day*.

866. *nakednesse*, H<sup>2</sup> *mekenes*.

Al youre plesancé wol I folwen fayn ;  
But yet I hope it be nat youre entente  
That I smoklees out of youre paleys wente. 875

Ye koude nat doon so dishoneste a thyng,  
That thilké wombe in which youre children leye  
Sholdé biforn the peple, in my walkyng,  
Be seyn al baré, wherfore I yow preye,  
Lat me nat lyk a worm go by the weye. 880  
Remembre yow, myn owene lord, so deere,  
I was youre wyf, though I unworthy weere ;

Wherfore in gerdoun of my maydenhede  
Which that I broghte, and noght agayn I bere,  
As vouchethsauf to geve me to my meede 885  
But swich a smok as I was wont to were,  
That I ther-with may wrye the wombe of here  
That was youre wyf ; and heer take I my leeve  
Of yow, myn owene lord, lest I yow greve."

"The smok," quod he, "that thou hast on thy  
bak, 890

Lat it be stille, and bere it forth with thee."

But wel unnethés thilké word he spak,  
But wente his wey, for routhe and for pitee.

Biforn the folk hirselves strepeth she,  
And in her smok, with heed and foot al bare, 895  
Toward hir fader hous forth is she fare.

887. *wrye*, cover.

888. *and heer*, etc., Chaucer's addition.



The folk hire folwé wepynge in hir weye,  
 And Fortune ay they cursen as they goon ;  
 But she fro wepyng kepte hire eyén dreye,  
 Ne in this tymé word ne spak she noon. 900

Hir fader, that this tidynge herde anoon,  
 Curseth the day and tymé that nature  
 Shoope hym to been a lyvès creature ;

For out of doute this oldé pouré man  
 Was evere in suspect of hir mariage ; 905  
 For evere he deméd, sith that it bigan,  
 That whan the lord fulfild hadde his corage,  
 Hym woldé thynke it were a disparage  
 To his estaat, so lowé for talighte,  
 And voyden hire as soone as ever he myghte. 910

Agayns his doghter hastiliche goth he,  
 For he by noyse of folk knew hire comynge,  
 And with hire oldé coote, as it myghte be,  
 He covered hire ful sorwefully wepynge ;  
 But on hire body myghte he it nat brynge, 915  
 For rudé was the clooth and moore of age  
 By deyés fele than at hire mariage.

Thus with hire fader, for a certeyn space,  
 Dwelleth this flour of wyfly paciencie,  
 That neither by hire wordés ne hire face, 920

903. *Shoope*, shaped.

expansion of "atritam  
 senio."

915 - 917. Chaucer's perverse 917. *fele*, many.

Biform the folk, ne eek in hire absence,  
 Ne shewed she that hire was doon offence ;  
 Ne of hire heighe estaat no remembraunce  
 Ne haddé she, as by hire contenance.

No wonder is, for in hire grete estaat, 925  
 Hire goost was evere in pleyn humylitee ;  
 No tendré mouth, noon herté delicaat,  
 No pompé, no semblant of roialtee ;  
 But ful of pacient benyngnytee,  
 Discreet and pridélees, ay honorable, 930  
 And to hire housbonde evere meke and stable.

Men speke of Job, and moost for his humblesse,  
 As clerkés, whan hem list, konne wel endite,  
 Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,  
 Though clerkés preisé wommen but a lite, 935  
 Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquite  
 As wommen kan, ne kan been half so trewe  
 As wommen been, but it be falle of newe.

## PART VI

Fro Boloigne is this erl of Panyk come, 939  
 Of which the fame up sprang to moore and lesse,  
 And to the peplés erés, alle and some,  
 Was kouth eek that a newé markysesse

932-938. Chaucer's addition, in  
 apparent forgetfulness that

it is a Clerk who is speaking.

941. *to, E in.*

He with hym broghte, in swich pompe and richesse,  
 That nevere was ther seyn with mannès eye  
 So noble array in al West Lumbardye. 945

The markys, which that shoope and knew al  
 this,  
 Er that this erl was come, sente his message  
 For thilké sely, pouré Grisildis ;  
 And she with humblé herte and glad visage,  
 Nat with no swollen thoght in hire corage, 950  
 Cam at his heste, and on hire knees hire sette,  
 And reverently and wisely she hym grette.

"Grisilde," quod he, "my wyl is, outrely,  
 This mayden, that shal wedded been to me,  
 Receivéd be to-morwe as roially 955  
 As it possfble is in myn hous to be,  
 And eek that every wight in his degree  
 Have his estaat in sittying and servyse  
 And heigh plesaunce as I kan best devyse.

I have no wommen suffisaunt, certayn, 960  
 The chambrés for tarraye in ordinaunce  
 After my lust, and therfore wolde I fayn  
 That thyn were al swich manere governaunce ;  
 Thou knowest eek of old al my plesaunce ;  
 Thogh thyn array be badde and yvel biseye, 965  
 Do thou thy devoir at the leesté weye."

948. *sely*, innocent.  
 950. *thoght*, H<sup>4</sup> *hert*.

961. *tarraye*, to array.  
 965. *biseye*, beseen.

"Nat oonly, lord, that I am glad," quod she,  
"To doon youre lust, but I desire also  
Yow for to serve and plese in my degree  
Withouten feynting, and shal everemo ; 970  
Ne nevere for no welé, ne no wo,  
Ne shal the goost withinne myn herté stente  
To love yow best, with al my trewe entente."

And with that word she gan the hous to dighte,  
And tables for to sette and beddés make, 975  
And peynéd hire to doon al that she myghte,  
Preyyng the chambrérés for Goddés sake  
To hasten hem, and fasté swepe and shake ;  
And she the moosté servysable of alle  
Hath every chambre arrayéd and his halle. 980

Abouten undren gan this erl alighte  
That with him broghte thise noble children  
tweye,  
For which the peplé ran to seen the sighte  
Of hire array so richely biseye ;  
And thanne at erst amongés hem they seye, 985  
That Walter was no fool, thogh that hym leste  
To chaunge his wyf, for it was for the beste ;

For she is fairer, as they deemen alle,  
Than is Grisilde, and mooré tendre of age,  
And fairer fruyt bitwene hem sholdé falle, 990

971. *ne no*, H<sup>2</sup> *ne for no*.

981. *Abouten undren*, a little before noon.

And mooré plesant, for hire heigh lynage ;  
 Hir brother eek so faire was of visage  
 That hem to seen the peple hath caught plesaunce,  
 Commendynge now the markys governaunce.—

“ O stormy peple ! unsad, and evere untrewé !  
 Ay undiscreet, and chaungynge as a vane, 996  
 Delitynge evere in rumbul that is newe ;  
 For lyk the moone, ay wexé ye and wane !  
 Ay ful of clappyng, deere ynogh a jane !  
 Youre doom is fals, youre constance yvele preeveth,  
 A ful greet fool is he that on yow leeveth.” 1001

Thus seyden saddé folk in that citee  
 Whan that the peplé gazéd up and down,—  
 For they were glad, right for the noveltee,  
 To han a newé lady of hir toun. 1005  
 Namore of this make I now mencion,  
 But to Grisilde agayn wol I me dresse,  
 And telle hir constance and hir bisynesse.—

Ful bisy was Grisilde in every thyng  
 That to the feesté was apertinent ; 1010  
 Right noght was she abayst of hire clothyng,  
 Thogh it were rude and somdeel eek to-rent,  
 But with glad cheeré to the gate is went

993. *the peple*, Petrarch merely says “*erantque qui dicerent*.” The next two stanzas are Chaucer’s addition (marked *Auctor* in E<sup>2</sup>), probably inserted in revising the tale.  
 999. *jane*, a small coin of Genoa.  
 1013. *is*, E<sup>2</sup> *is she*.

With oother folk to greette the markysesse,  
And after that dooth forth hire bisynesse. 1015

With so glad chiere hise gestés she receyveth,  
And konnyngly, everich in his degree,  
That no defauté no man aperceyveth,  
But ay they wondren what she myghté bee  
That in so poure array was for to see, 1020  
And koudé swich honóur and reverence,  
And worthily they preisen hire prudence.

In al this meenè-while she ne stente  
This mayde, and eek hir brother, to commende  
With al hir herte, in ful benyngne entente, 1025  
So wel that no man koude hir pris amende ;  
But atté laste whan that thise lordés wende  
To sitten down to mete, he gan to calle  
Grisilde, as she was bisy in his halle.

"Grisilde," quod he, as it were in his pley, 1030

"How liketh thee my wyf, and hire beautee?"

"Right wel," quod she, "my lord, for in good  
fey

A fairer saugh I nevere noon than she ;  
I prey to God geve hire prosperitee ;  
And so hope I that he wol to yow sende 1035  
Plesance ynogh unto youre lyvés ende.

1016. *hise*, Camb. *hire*, Pet.  
*the*.

1025. *benyngne*, H *buxom*.  
1026. *pris*, praise.

O thyng biseke I yow, and warne also,  
 That ye ne prikkè with no tormentyng  
 This tendré mayden, as ye han doon mo ;  
 For she is fostréd in hire norissyng 1040  
 Moore tendrely, and, to my supposyng,  
 She koudé nat adversitee endure  
 As koude a pouré fostréd creature."

And whan this Walter saugh hire paciencie,  
 Hir gladé chiere, and no malice at al, 1045  
 And he so ofte had doon to hire offence  
 And she ay sad and constant as a wal,  
 Continuyng evere hire innocence overal,  
 This sturdy markys gan his herté dresse  
 To rewen upon hire wyfly stedfastnesse. 1050

"This is ynogh, Grisildé myn," quod he,  
 "Be now namoore agast, ne yvele apayed ;  
 I have thy feith and thy benyngnytee,  
 As wel as evere womman was, assayed,  
 In greet estaat and pouréliche arrayed. 1055  
 Now knowe I, goodé wyf, thy stedfastnesse ;"  
 And hire in armés took, and gan hire kesse.

And she for wonder took of it no keepe,  
 She herdé nat what thyng he to hire seyde,  
 She ferde, as she had stert out of a sleepe, 1060

1039. *mo*, more, others ; cp.  
 Petrarch "ne hanc illis  
 aculeis agites, quibus  
 alteram agitasti." Even  
 now she will not say 'me.'

1045. *glade*, E<sup>8</sup> *glad*.

1055. *pourelliche*, H *proppe-  
liche*!

1056. *goode*, H<sup>8</sup> *dere*.

Til she out of hire mazèdnesse abreyde.  
"Grisilde," quod he, "by God that for us deyde,  
Thou art my wyf, ne noon oother I have,  
Ne nevere hadde, as God my soule save !

This is thy doghter, which thou hast supposed  
To be my wyf,—that oother feithfully 1066  
Shal be myn heir, as I have ay purposed ;  
Thou bare hym in thy body trewely ;  
At Boloigne have I kept hem prively.  
Taak hem agayn, for now maystow nat seye 1070  
That thou hast lorn noon of thy children tweye ;

And folk that ootherweys han seyde of me,  
I warne hem wel that I have doon this deede  
For no malice, ne for no crueltee,  
But for tassaye in thee thy wommanheede, 1075  
And nat to sleen my children, God forbeede !  
But for to kepe hem pryvely and stille  
Til I thy purpos knewe and al thy wille."

Whan she this herde, aswowné doun she falleth  
For pitous joye, and after hire swownynge 1080  
She bothe hire yongé children to hire calleth,  
And in hire armés, pitously wepynge,  
Embraceth hem, and tendrély kysynge,  
Ful lyk a mooder, with hire salté teeres  
She bathéd bothe hire visage and hire heeres. 1085

1061. *abreyde*, awoke.1067. *purposed*, E<sup>3</sup> *supposed*,  
Pet. *disposed*.1081. *to*, E<sup>3</sup> *unto*.1084. *Ful lyk a mooder*,  
Chaucer's phrase.



O which a pitous thyng it was to se  
 Hir swownyng, and hire humblé voys to heere !  
 “*Graunt mercy*, lord ! that thanke I yow,” quod  
 she,  
 “That ye han savéd me my children deere.  
 Now rekke I nevere to been deed right heere, 1090  
 Sith I stonde in youre love and in youre grace.  
 No fors of deeth, ne whan my spirit pace !

O tendre, O deere, O yongé children myne !  
 Youre woful mooder wendé stedfastly  
 That crueel houndés, or som foul vermyne, 1095  
 Hadde eten yow ; but God, of his mercy,  
 And youre benyngné fader, tendrèly  
 Hath doon yow kept”—and in that samé stounde  
 Al sodeynly she swapte adoun to grounde ;

And in hire swough so sadly holdeth she 1100  
 Hire children two, whan she gan hem tembrace,  
 That with greet sleighte, and greet difficultee  
 The children from hire arm they goone arace.

O many a teere on many a pitous face  
 Doun ran, of hem that stooden hire bisyde ; 1105  
 Unnethe abouten hire myghte they abyde !

Walter hire gladeth, and hire sorwé slaketh ;  
 She riseth up abayséd from hire traunce,

1086-1113. Chaucer's addition.

1088. *that thanke I yow*, H<sup>6</sup> *God*  
*thank it (thanke) you*, *God*  
*I thank it (thank) you.*

1098. *stounde*, time.

1099. *swapte*, swopped, fell  
 suddenly.

1103. *arace*, tear.

And every wight hire joye and feeste maketh,  
Til she hath caught agayn hire contenance. 1110  
Walter hire dooth so feithfully plesaunce  
That it was deyntee for to seen the cheere  
Bitwixe hem two, now they been met yfeere.

Thise ladyes, whan that they hir tyme saye,  
Han taken hire and into chambré gon, 1115  
And strepen hire out of hire rude array,  
And in a clooth of gold that brighte shoon,  
With a coroune of many a riché stoon  
Upon hire heed, they into halle hire broghte,  
And ther she was honúred as hire oghte. 1120

Thus hath this pitous day a blisful ende,  
For every man and womman dooth his myght  
This day in murthe and revel to dispende,  
Til on the welkné shoon the sterrés lyght ;  
For more solempne in every mannés syght 1125  
This festé was, and gretter of costage,  
Than was the revel of hire mariage.

Ful many a yeer in heigh prosperitee  
Lyven thise two in concord and in reste,  
And richely his doghter maryed he 1130  
Unto a lord, oon of the worthieste  
Of al Ytaille ; and thanne in pees and reste  
His wyvès fader in his court he kepeth,  
Til that the soule out of his body crepeth.

1113. *yfeere*, in company.1124. *lyght*, 11<sup>4</sup> *bright*.

His sone succedeth in his heritage 1135  
 In reste and pees after his fader day,  
 And fortunat was eek in mariage ;  
 Al putte he nat his wyf in greet assay.  
 This world is nat so strong, it is no nay,  
 As it hath been of oldé tymés yoores ; 1140  
 And herkneth what this auctour seith therfoore.

This storie is seyde, nat for that wyvès sholde  
 Folwen Grisilde as in humylitee,  
 For it were inportable, though they wolde,—  
 But for that every wight in his degree 1145  
 Sholdé be constant in adversitee  
 As was Grisildé, therfore Petrak writeth  
 This storie, which with heigh stile he enditeth ;

For sith a womman was so pacient  
 Unto a mortal man, wel moore us oghte 1150  
 Receyven al in gree that God us sent,  
 For greet skile is he preevè that he wroghte.  
 But he ne tempteth no man that he boghte,  
 As seith Seint Jame, if ye his pistel rede.  
 He preeveth folk al day, it is no drede, 1155

And suffreth us, as for oure exercise,  
 With sharpé scourges of adversitee  
 Ful ofté to be bete in sondry wise,

1140. *of*, H<sup>6</sup> *in*.

1141. *this auctour*, Petrarch,  
 who added the moral-  
 izing of the next three

stanzas to Boccaccio's  
 tale.

1144. *inportable*, unbearable.

1151. *in gree*, in good part.

Nat for to know oure wyl, for certès he,  
 Er we were born, knew al oure frelètee ; 1160  
 And for oure beste is al his governaunce ;  
 Lat us thanne lyve in vertuous suffraunce.

But o word, lordynges, herkneth, er I go :  
 It were ful hard to fyndè now-a-dayes  
 In al a toun Grisildis thre or two, 1165  
 For if that they were put to swiche assayes,  
 The gold of hem hath now so badde alayes  
 With bras, that thogh the coyne be fair at eye  
 It woldè rather breste atwo than plye ;

For which heere, for the Wyvès love of Bathe,—  
 Whos lyf and al hire sectè God mayntene 1171  
 In heigh maistrie, and ellès were it scathe,—  
 I wol with lusty hertè, fressh and grene,  
 Seyn yow a song, to gladè yow, I wene ;  
 And lat us stynte of earnestful matere : 1175  
 Herkneth my song that seith in this manere.

*Lenvoy de Chaucer*

Grisilde is deed, and eek hire pacience,  
 And bothe atonès buryed in Ytaille ;  
 For which I crie in open audience,

1163. *But o word.* What follows is all Chaucer's.  
 1169. *plye*, bend.

1175. The unsuitableness of all this to the Clerk has often been noticed.

No wedded man so hardy be tassaille 1180  
 His wyvès pacience in hope to fynde  
 Grisildis, for in certein he shal faille !

O noble wyvès, ful of heigh prudence,  
 Lat noon humylitee youre tongé naill,  
 Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence 1185  
 To write of yow a storie of swich mervaille  
 As of Grisildis pacient and kynde,  
 Lest *Chichivache* yow swelwe in hire entraille !

Folweth Ekko, that holdeth no silence,  
 But evere answereth at the countretaille. 1190  
 Beth nat bidaffed for youre innocence,  
 But sharply taak on yow the governaille.  
 Emprinteth wel this lessoun in youre mynde  
 For commune profit sith it may availle.

Ye archiwyvès stondeth at defense, 1195  
 Syn ye be strong as is a greet camaille,  
 Ne suffreth nat that men yow doon offense ;  
 And sklendré wyvès, fieble, as in bataille,  
 Beth egre as is a tygrè yond in Ynde ;  
 Ay clappeth as a mille, I yow consaille ; 1200

1180. *tassaille*, H<sup>4</sup> to *assayle*.

1184. *tonge*, H *tonges*.

1188. *Chichivache*, the lean cow who fed on patient wives while her mate Bycorne grew fat on humble husbands. A corruption of *chichefache*, lean-faced.

1188. *swelwe*, swallow.

1190. *countretaille*, at the counter-tally, as one tally answers another.

1196. *camaille*, camel.

1198. *wyves*, *fioble*, H *wydwes felle*.

1200. *clappeth*, clatter.

Ne dreed hem nat, doth hem no reverence,  
 For though thyn housbonde arméd be in maille,  
 The arwés of thy crabbéd eloquence  
 Shal perce his brest, and eek his aventaille.  
 In jalousie I rede eek thou hym bynde, 1205  
 And thou shalt make hym couche as dooth a quaille.

If thou be fair, ther folk been in presence  
 Shewe thou thy visage and thyn apparaille ;  
 If thou be foul, be fre of thy dispence,  
 To gete thee freendés, ay do thy travaille ; 1210  
 Be ay of chiere, as light as leef on lynde,  
 And lat hym care and wepe, and wryng and waille !

*The Prologe of the Marchantes Tale*

"Wepying and waylyng, care and oother sorwe  
 I knowe ynogh, on even and a morwe," 1214  
 Quod the Marchant, "and so doon othere mo  
 That wedded been, I trowe that it be so ;  
 For wel I woot it fareth so with me.  
 I have a wyf, the worsté that may be,  
 For thogh the feend to hire y-coupled were,  
 She wolde hym overmacche, I dar wel swere. 1220  
 What sholde I yow reherce in special  
 Hir hye malice? She is a shrewe at al.  
 Ther is a long and largé difference

1204. *aventaille*, front of a helmet. 1214. *on*, H *both on*, Heng. *both*.

1211. *lynde*, lime-tree.

1223. *large*, H<sup>6</sup> *a large*.

Bitwix Grisildis gretè pacience,  
 And of my wyf the passyng crueltee. 1225  
 Were I unbounden, al so moot I thee!  
 I woldè nevere eft comen in the snare.  
 We wedded men lyve in sorwe and care.  
 Assayè who so wole and he shal fynde  
 I seyè sooth, by Seint Thomas of Ynde! 1230  
 As for the moorè part, I sey nat alle;  
 God shildè that it sholdè so bifalle!

"A! good sire Hoost! I have y-wedded bee  
 Thise monthès two, and moorè nat, *pardee!*  
 And yet, I trowè, he that al his lyve 1235  
 Wyflees hath been, though that men wolde him  
 ryve

Unto the herte, ne koude in no manere  
 Tellen so muchel sorwe as I now heere  
 Koude tellen of my wyvès cursednesse!"

"Now," quod our Hoost, "Marchant, so God  
 yow blesse! 1240

Syn ye so muchel knowen of that art,  
 Ful hertély I pray yow telle us part."

"Gladly," quod he, "but of myn owenè soore,  
 For soory herte, I tellè may namoore."

1226. *thee*, thrive.1228. *sorwe*, Heng.<sup>8</sup> *sorow*.1230. *I*, H<sup>6</sup> *That I*.1232. *shilde*, forbid.

## MERCHANT'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Marchantes Tale*

Whilom ther was dwellynge in Lumbardye 1245  
 A worthy knyght that born was of Pavye,  
 In which he lyved in greet prosperitee ;  
 And sixty yeer a wyflee man was hee,  
 And folwed ay his bodily delyt  
 On wommen ther as was his appetyt, 1250  
 As doon thise foolés that been seculeer ;  
 And whan that he was passéd sixty yeer,  
 Were it for hoolynesse or for dotage  
 I kan nat seye, but swich a greet corage  
 Haddé this knyght to been a wedded man 1255  
 That day and nyght he dooth al that he kan  
 Tespien where he myghté wedded be ;  
 Preyinge oure Lord to granten him that he  
 Mighte onés knowe of thilké blisful lyf  
 That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf, 1260  
 And for to lyve under that hooly boond

*The Marchantes Tale:* the  
 Pear-tree incident in  
 this story is the subject  
 of the ninth novel of  
 the seventh day in Boc-  
 caccio's *Decamerone*, and  
 is found also in a col-  
 lection of Latin fables  
 by one Adolphus,  
 written in 1315, and  
 elsewhere. It has prob-

ably an Eastern origin.  
 We cannot tell where  
 Chaucer found it, but  
 his setting of it was  
 doubtless mainly his  
 own.

1248. *sixty*, H<sup>2</sup> *fourty*; so H  
 in 1252.

1259. *of thilke*, H<sup>2</sup> *of that*,  
 Camb.<sup>2</sup> *that*.



With which that first God man and womman bond.  
 "Noon oother lyf," seyde he, "is worth a bene,  
 For wedlok is so esy, and so clene,  
 That in this world it is a paradys ;" 1265  
 Thus seyde this oldé knyght, that was so wys.

And certainly, as sooth as God is kyng,  
 To take a wyf it is a glorious thyng,  
 And namely whan a man is oold and hoor,—  
 Thanne is a wyf the fruyt of his tresor,— 1270  
 Thanne sholde he take a yong wyf and a feir,  
 On which he myghte engendren hym an heir,  
 And lede his lyf in joye and in solas ;  
 Where as thise bacheléris synge, "Allas !"  
 Whan that they fynden any adversitee 1275  
 In love, which nys but childyssh vanytee ;  
 And trewely it sit wel to be so  
 That bacheleris have often peyne and wo ;  
 On brotel ground they buylde, and brotelnesse  
 They fyndé whan they wené sikernesse. 1280  
 They lyve but as a bryd, or as a beest,  
 In libertee and under noon arreest ;  
 Ther as a wedded man, in his estaat,  
 Lyveth a lyf blisful and ordinaat,  
 Under this yok of mariage y-bounde. 1285  
 Wel may his herte in joye and blisse habounde,  
 For who kan be so buxom as a wyf ?  
 Who is so trewe and eek so ententyf  
 To kepe hym, syk and hool, as is his make ?  
 For wele or wo she wole hym nat forsake ; 1290

1273. *joye*, H *mirth*.1277. *sit*, sitteth, fits.

She nys nat wery hym to love and serve,  
 Thogh that he lye bedredé til he sterve.

And yet somme clerkés seyn it nys nat so,  
 Of whiche he, Theofraste, is oon of tho.  
 What force though Theofraste listé lye? 1295  
 "Ne take no wyf," quod he, "for housbondrye,  
 As for to spare in houshold thy dispençe;  
 A trewé servant dooth moore diligence  
 Thy good to kepé, than thyn owené wyf,  
 For she wol claymé half part al hir lyf; 1300  
 And if that thou be syk, so God me save!  
 Thy verray freendés, or a trewé knave,  
 Wol kepe thee bet than she, that waiteth ay  
 After thy good, and hath doon many a day;  
 And if thou take a wyf unto thyn hoold, 1305  
 Ful lightly maystow been a cokéwold."  
 This sentence, and an hundred thyngés worse,  
 Writeth this man, ther God his bonés corse!  
 But take no kepe of al swich vanytee;  
 Deffieth Theofraste and herké me. 1310

A wyf is Goddés gifté verrailly;  
 Alle othere manere giftés hardily,  
 As londés, rentés, pasture, or commune,  
 Or moeblés, alle been giftés of Fortune,  
 That passen as a shadwe upon a wal; 1315

1292. *bedrede*, etc., bedridden  
 till he die.

1294. *Theofraste*, see Wife of  
 Bath's Tale, ll. 235, 671.

1301. *that*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

1305, 1306. Apparently this

couplet shocked the  
 copyists, for in H, etc.,  
 there are three bad sub-  
 stitutes for it.

1314. *moebles*, moveables,  
 chattels.

But dredélees, if pleynty speke I shal,  
 A wyf wol laste and in thyn hous endure,  
 Wel lenger than thee list, paráventure.

Marriage is a ful greet sacrament ;  
 He which that hath no wyf I holde hym shent ;  
 He lyveth helples and al desolat,— 1321  
 I speke of folk in seculer estaat ;  
 And herké why, I sey nat this for noght,  
 That womman is for mannés helpe y-wroght.  
 The hyé God whan he hadde Adam maked, 1325  
 And saugh him al alloné, bely naked,  
 God of his greté goodnesse seyde than,  
 “ Lat us now make an helpe unto this man,  
 Lyk to hymself ; ” and thanne he made him Eve.  
 Heere may ye se, and heerby may ye preve, 1330  
 That wyf is mannés helpe and his confort,  
 His Paradys terrestre, and his disport ;  
 So buxom and so vertuous is she,  
 They mosté nedés lyve in unitee.  
 O flessch they been, and o flessch, as I gesse, 1335  
 Hath but oon herte in wele and in distresse.

A wyf ! a ! Seinté Marie, *benedicite*,  
 How myghte a man han any adversitee  
 That hath a wyf ? Certés, I kan nat seye.  
 The blissé which that is bitwixe hem tweye 1340  
 Ther may no tongé telle or herté thynke.  
 If he be poure she helpeth hym to swynke,

1316. *dredelees*, H<sup>5</sup> *drede not*.1320. *shent*, disgraced.1321. *al*, H<sup>4</sup> *is al*.1328. *unto*, H<sup>3</sup> *to*.1335. *flessch* (2), H<sup>3</sup> *blood*.1340. *blisse*, H *joye*.

She kepeth his good and wasteth never a deel ;  
 Al that hire housbonde lust hire liketh weel ; 1344  
 She seith not onés, " nay," whan he seith, " ye."  
 " Do this," seith he ; " Al redy, sire," seith she.

O blisful ordre of wedlok precious !  
 Thou art so murye, and eek so vertuous,  
 And so commended and apprevèd eek,  
 That every man that halt hym worth a leek, 1350  
 Upon his baré knees, oughte, al his lyf,  
 Thanken his God that hym hath sent a wyf ;  
 Or ellés preye to God hym for to sende  
 A wyf, to laste unto his lyvès ende ;  
 For thanne his lyf is set in sikernesse ; 1355  
 He may nat be deceyvèd, as I gesse,  
 So that he werke after his wyvès reede.  
 Thanne may he boldely kepen up his heed,  
 They been so trewe, and therwithal so wyse ;  
 For which, if thou wolt werken as the wyse, 1360  
 Do alwey so as wommen wol thee reede.

Lo, how that Jacob, as thise clerkès rede,  
 By good conseil of his mooder Rebekke,  
 Boondè the kydès skyn aboute his nekke,  
 Thurgh which his fadrès benysoun he wan. 1365

Lo Judith, as the storie tellè kan,  
 By wys conseil she Goddès peple kepte,  
 And slow hym Olofernus whil he slepte.

1344. *Al*, H<sup>3</sup> *And al*.

1347. *Of*, H<sup>4</sup> repeat *O*.

1350. *halt hym*, holds himself.

1353. *elles*, om. H<sup>4</sup>, H insert-  
 ing *oon* before *hym*, and

*to be with hym for a  
 wyf to laste.*

1356-1359. Om. E; text from  
 Heng.

1366. *storie*, E<sup>4</sup> *storie eek*.

Lo Abigayl, by good conseil how she  
 Savéd hir housbonde, Nabal, whan that he 1370  
 Sholde han be slayn ; and looke Ester also,  
 By good conseil delyvered out of wo  
 The peple of God, and made hym Mardochee  
 Of Assuere enhauncéd for to be.

Ther nys no thyng in gree superlatyf, 1375  
 As seith Senek, above an humble wyf.

Suffre thy wyvès tonge, as Catoun bit,  
 She shal comande, and thou shalt suffren it,  
 And yet she wole obeye of curteisye ;  
 A wyf is kepere of thyn housbondrye. 1380

Wel may the siké man biwaille and wepe,  
 Ther as ther nys no wyf the hous to kepe.  
 I warnè thee if wisely thou wolt wirche,  
 Love wel thy wyf, as Crist lovéd his chirche.  
 If thou lovest thyself thou lovest thy wyf. 1385

No man hateth his flessch, but in his lyf  
 He fostreth it, and therfore bidde I thee  
 Cherisse thy wyf, or thou shalt nevere thee.  
 Housbonde and wyf, what so men jape or  
 pleye,

Of worldly folk holden the siker weye ; 1390  
 They been so knyght ther may noon harm bityde,  
 And namèly upon the wyvès syde ;

- |                                |   |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1375. Glossed in E and Heng. : | linguam, si frugi est,                                    |
| "Seneca : Sicut nichil est     | ferre memento."   |
| superius (om. E) benigna       | 1384. <i>loved</i> , Corp. <sup>2</sup> <i>loveth</i> , H |
| conjugé, ita nihil crude-      | <i>doth</i> .   |
| lius est infesta muliere."     | 1387. <i>bidde</i> , H <i>warne</i> .                     |
|                                | 1388. <i>thee</i> , thrive.                               |
| 1377. Glossed, "Cato : Uxor is | 1390. <i>siker</i> , H <i>righte</i> .                    |

For which this Januarie, of whom I tolde,  
 Considered hath, inwith hise dayès olde,  
 The lusty lyf, the vertuous quyete, 1395  
 That is in mariágè hony sweete ;  
 And for hise freendès on a day he sente,  
 To tellen hem theeffect of his entente.

With face sad his tale he hath hem toold.  
 He seyde, "Freendès, I am hoor and oold, 1400  
 And almoost, God woot, on my pittès brynke ;  
 Upon the soulè somewhat moste I thynke.  
 I have my body folily despended ;  
 Blesséd be God ! that it shal been amended,  
 For I wol be certeyn a wedded man, 1405  
 And that anoon, in al the haste I kan.  
 Unto som maydè, fair and tendre of age,  
 I prey yow shapeth for my mariage  
 Al sodeynly, for I wol nat abyde ;  
 And I wol fonde tespian on my syde 1410  
 To whom I may be wedded hastily ;  
 But for as muche as ye been mo than I,  
 Ye shullen rather swich a thyng espyen  
 Than I, and where me best were to allyen.  
 But o thyng warne I yow, my freendès deere, 1415  
 I wol noon oold wyf han in no manere.  
 She shal nat passè twenty yeer certayn,  
 Oold fissh and yongè flessch wolde I have fayn.  
 Bet is," quod he, "a pyk than a pykerel,

1399. *his tale he hath hem*, H<sup>6</sup>*he hath hem this tale.*1402. *the*, H<sup>6</sup> *my*.1408. *shapeth*, H *helpith*.1414. *best were*, H<sup>4</sup> *lust best*.1417. *twenty*, H<sup>4</sup> *sixtene*.1418. *fayn*, H<sup>4</sup> *ful fayn*, Pet.  
*certayn*.

And bet than olde boef is the tendré veel. 1420  
 I wol no womman thritty yeer of age,—  
 It is but benéstraw and greet forage ;  
 And eek thise oldé wydwe's, God it woot,  
 They konne so muchel craft on Wadés boot,  
 So muchel broken harm whan that hem leste, 1425  
 That with hem sholde I nevere lyve in reste ;  
 For sondry scolés maken sotile clerkis.  
 Womman of manye scolés half a clerk is ;  
 But certeynly a yonge thyng may men gye,  
 Right as men may warm wex with handés plye.  
 Wherefore I sey yow pleynly in a clause, 1431  
 I wol noon oold wyf han right for this cause ;  
 For if so were that I hadde swich myschaunce  
 That I in hire ne koude han no plesaunce,  
 Thanne sholde I lede my lyf in avoutrye, 1435  
 And go streight to the devel whan I dye ;  
 Ne children sholde I none upon hire geten ;  
 Yet were me levere houndés had me eten,  
 Than that myn heritagé sholdé falle  
 In straungé hand, and this I telle yow alle. 1440  
 I doté nat ; I woot the causé why  
 Men sholdé wedde, and forthermoore woot I  
 Ther speketh many a man of mariage,  
 That woot namoore of it than woot my page.  
 For whiché causés man sholde take a wyf : 1445

1421. *thritty*, H<sup>3</sup> *twenty*.1424. *on Wades boot*, only a fragment of the romance of Wade's adventures in his boat Guingelot survives.1432. *right*, om. E<sup>4</sup>.1435. *avoutrye*, adultery.1436. *go*, om. E<sup>3</sup> ; Corp.<sup>8</sup> *so*.1438. *houndes*, E<sup>3</sup> *that houndes*.1440. *this*, H<sup>4</sup> *thus*.

Siththé he may nat lyven chaast his lyf,  
 Take hym a wyf with greet devocioun,  
 By cause of leveful procreacioun  
 Of children, to thonour of God above,  
 And nat oonly for paramour or love ; 1450  
 And for they sholdé leccherye eschue,  
 And yelde hir dettès whan that they ben due ;  
 Or for that ech of hem sholde helpen oother  
 In meschief, as a suster shal the brother,  
 And lyve in chastitee ful holily ; 1455  
 But, sirès, by youre leve, that am nat I,  
 For, God be thanked, I dar make avaunt,  
 I feele my lymès stark and suffisaunt  
 To do al that a man bilongeth to ;  
 I woot my selven best what I may do. 1460  
 Though I be hoor ·I fare as dooth a tree  
 That blometh, er that fruyt y-woxen bee ;  
 And blommy tree nys neither drye ne deed.  
 I feele me nowhere hoor but on myn heed ;  
 Myn herte and alle my lymès been as grene 1465  
 As laurer thurgh the yeer is for to sene ;  
 And syn that ye han herd al myn entente,  
 I prey yow to my wyl ye wole assente."

Diversé men diversely hym tolde  
 Of mariágé manye ensamples olde. 1470  
 Somme blaméd it, somme preyséd it certeyn,  
 But atté lasté, shortly for to seyn,

1446. *H<sup>4</sup> If he ne (om. Corp.<sup>2</sup>)  
may not chast be by his  
life.*

1452. *they ben, H<sup>6</sup> it is.*

1453. *ech of hem, H<sup>4</sup> ilke (Pet.  
eche) man.*

1455. *holily, H<sup>4</sup> heavenly.*



As al day falleth altercacioun  
 Bitwixen freendès in disputisoun,  
 Ther fil a stryf bitwixe hise bretheren two, 1475  
 Of whiche that oon was clepéd Placebo,  
 Justinus soothly calléd was that oother.

Placebo seyde, "O Januarie brother,  
 Ful litel nede hadde ye, my lord so deere,  
 Conseil to axe of any that is heere, 1480  
 But that ye been so ful of sapience  
 That yow ne liketh, for youre heighe prudence,  
 To weyven fro the word of Salomon.  
 This word seyde he unto us everychon,  
 'Wirk allé thyng by conseil,' thus seyde he, 1485  
 'And thanné shaltow nat repenté thee ;'  
 But though that Salomon spak swich a word,  
 Myn owenè deerè brother, and my lord,  
 So wysly God my soulé brynge at reste,  
 I holde youre owene conseil is the beste ; 1490  
 For, brother myn, of me taak this motyf,  
 I have now been a court man al my lyf,  
 And, God it woot, though I unworthy be,  
 Í have stonden in ful greet degree  
 Abouten lordès of ful heigh estaat ; 1495  
 Yet hadde I nevere with noon of hem debaat ;  
 I nevere hem contraried trewely.  
 I woot wel that my lord kan moore than I ;  
 What that he seith I holde it ferme and stable ;  
 I seye the same, or ellés thyng semblable. 1500

1477. *called*, H<sup>5</sup> *cleped*. 1483. *weyven*, depart from.

1495. *heigh*, H<sup>5</sup> *gret*.

A ful greet fool is any conseilour,  
 That serveth any lord of heigh honóur,  
 That dar presume, or ellés thenken it,  
 That his conseil sholde passe his lordés wit.  
 Nay, lordés been no foolés, by my fay ! 1505  
 Ye han youreselven shewed heer to day  
 So heigh sentence, so holily and weel,  
 That I consente and conferme everydeel  
 Youre wordes alle, and youre opinioun.  
 By God, ther nys no man in al this toun, 1510  
 Ne in Ytaillé, koudé bet han sayd.  
 Crist halt hym of this conseil wel apayd ;  
 And trewely it is an heigh corage,  
 Of any man that stapen is in age,  
 To take a yong wyf ; by my fader kyn, 1515  
 Youre herté hangeth on a joly pyn !  
 Dooth now in this matiere right as yow leste,  
 For, finally, I holde it for the beste."

Justinus, that ay stillé sat and herde,  
 Right in this wise to Placebo answerde : 1520  
 "Now, brother myn, be pacient I preye,  
 Syn ye han seyde, and herkneth what I seye.

"Senek among hise othere wordés wyse  
 Seith that a man oghte hym right wel avyse  
 To whom he geveth his lond or his catel ; 1525  
 And syn I oghte avysé me right wel  
 To whom I geve my good away fro me,

1503. *elles*, H<sup>4</sup> *oones*.1506. *shewed*, Heng.<sup>3</sup> ; E *seyd*,  
H<sup>4</sup> *y-spoken*, *spoken*.1511. *Ne in*, E *Nyn*.1511. *koude*, E<sup>3</sup> *that koude*.1512. *halt*, holds ; H<sup>4</sup> *holdith*.1514. *stapen*, advanced.1520. *to*, EH<sup>5</sup> *he to*.

Wel muchel moore I oghte avyséd be  
 To whom I geve my body for alwey.  
 I warne yow wel, it is no childès pley 1530  
 To take a wyf withoute avysément.  
 Men moste enquerè, this is myn assent,  
 Wher she be wys, or sobre, or dronkélewe,  
 Or proud, or ellès ootherweys a shrewe,  
 A chidestere, or a wastour of thy good, 1535  
 Or riche, or poore, or ellès mannyssh wood.  
 Al be it so that no man fynden shal  
 Noon in this world that trotteth hool in al,  
 Ne man ne beest, which as men koude devyse,  
 But nathélees it oghte ynough suffise 1540  
 With any wyf, if so were that she hadde  
 Mo goodé thewès than hire vices badde ;  
 And al this axeth leyser for tenquere,—  
 For, God it woot, I have wept many a teere  
 Ful pryvèly, syn I have had a wyf. 1545  
 Preyse who so wole a wedded mannès lyf,  
 Certein I fynde in it but cost and care,  
 And observance of allé blisses bare ;  
 And yet, God woot, my neighébores aboute,  
 And namèly of wommen many a route, 1550  
 Seyn that I have the moosté stedefast wyf,

1528. *muchel*, om. H<sup>5</sup>, H inserting *for to* before *be*.

1535. *A*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

*chidestere*, scold.

1536. *mannyssh wood*, mad like a virago.

1539. *which*, H<sup>5</sup> *suck*.  
*koude*, H<sup>3</sup> *can*.

1542. *thewes*, virtues.

1543. *for tenquere*, H<sup>3</sup> *to enquire*.

1544. *it*, om. H, reading *weped* for *wept*.

1548. *observance*, E<sup>6</sup> *observances*.

And eek the mekeste oon that bereth lyf;  
But I woot best where wryngeth me my sho.  
Ye mowe, for me, right as yow liketh do.  
Avyseth yow, ye been a man of age, 1555  
How that ye entren into mariage,  
And namely with a yong wyf and a fair.  
By hym that madé water, erthe, and air,  
The yongeste man that is in al this route  
Is bisy ynough to bryngen it aboute 1560  
To han his wyf alloné; trusteth me,  
Ye shul nat plesen hire fully yerès thre,—  
This is to seyn, to doon hire ful plesaunce.  
A wyf axeth ful many an observaunce.  
I prey yow that ye be nat yvele apayd." 1565  
"Wel," quod this Januarie, "and hastow sayd?  
Straw for thy Senek, and for thy provérbes!  
I counté nat a panyer ful of herbes  
Of scolé termés; wyser men than thow,  
As thou hast herd, assenteden right now 1570  
To my purpos. Placebo, what sey ye?"  
"I seye it is a curséd man," quod he,  
"That letteth matrimoigné sikerly!"  
And with that word they rysen sodeynly,  
And been assented fully that he sholde 1575  
Be wedded whanne hym list and where he  
wolde.

Heigh fantasye and curious bisynesse  
Fro day to day gan in the soule impresse  
Of Januarie, aboute his mariáge.

1562. *plesen*, H<sup>2</sup> *plese*.

1574. *rysen*, H *rysen up*.

Many fair shape and many a fair visage 1580  
 Ther passeth thurgh his herté nyght by nyght,  
 As whoso tooke a mirour polissed bryght  
 And sette it in a commune market-place,  
 Thanne sholde he se ful many a figure pace  
 By his mirour ; and in the samé wyse 1585  
 Gan Januarie inwith his thoght devyse  
 Of maydens whiche that dwellen hym bisyde.  
 He wisté nat wher that he myghte abyde,  
 For, if that oon have beaute in hir face,  
 Another stant so in the peples grace 1590  
 For hire sadnesse and hire benyngnytee,  
 That of the peple grettest voys hath she ;  
 And somme were riche, and hadden baddé name ;  
 But nathélees, bitwixe ernest and game,  
 He atté laste apoynted hym on oon, 1595  
 And leet alle othere from his herté goon,  
 And chees hire of his owene auctoritee ;  
 For love is blynd al day, and may nat see.  
 And whan that he was in his bed y-broght  
 He purtreied in his herte and in his thoght 1600  
 Hir fresshé beautee, and hir agé tendre,  
 Hir myddel smal, hire armés longe and sklendre,  
 Hir wisé governaunce, hir gentillesse,  
 Hir wommanly berynge, and hire sadnesse.  
 And whan that he on hire was condescended 1605  
 Hym thoughte his choys myghté nat ben amended ;

1580. *Many* (1), H *Many a*. 1587. *dwellen*, H<sup>4</sup> *dwelid*,

*dwelten*, etc.

1584. *ful*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

1589. *if*, H<sup>4</sup> *though*.

For whan that he hym self concluded hadde,  
Hym thoughte ech oother mannés wit so badde  
That inpossfble it weré to repplye  
Agayn his choys,—this was his fantasye. 1610  
Hise freendés sente he to, at his instaunce,  
And preyed hem to doon hym that plesaunce,  
That hastily they wolden to hym come ;  
He wolde abregge hir labour, alle and some ;  
Nedeth namoore for hym to go ne ryde, 1615  
He was apoynted ther he wolde abyde.

Placebo cam, and eek hise freendés soone,  
And alderfirst he bad hem alle a boone,  
That noon of hem none argumentés make  
Agayn the purpos which that he hath take, 1620  
Which purpos was plesant to God, seyde he,  
And verray ground of his prosperitee.

He seyde thier was a mayden in the toun,  
Which that of beautee haddé greet renoun,  
Al were it so she were of smal degree, 1625  
Suffiseth hym hir yowthe, and hir beautee ;  
Which mayde, he seyde, he wolde han to his wyf,  
To lede in ese and hoolynesse his lyf ;  
And thanked God that he myghte han hire al,  
Thát no wight his blissé parten shal ; 1630  
And preyedé hem to laboure in this nede  
And shapen that he faillé nat to spede ;  
For thanne he seyde his spirit was at ese.  
“Thanne is,” quod he, “no thyng may me displese,  
Save o thyng priketh in my conscience, 1635  
The which I wol reherce in youre presence.

"I have," quod he, "herd seyð, ful yoore ago,  
 Ther may no man han parfite blissès two,—  
 This is to seye, in erthe and eek in hevene,—  
 For though he kepe hym fro the synnès sevene,  
 And eek from every branche of thilké tree, 1641  
 Yet is ther so parfit felicitée  
 And so greet ese and lust in mariáge,  
 That evere I am agast now in myn age,  
 That I shal ledè now so myrie a lyf, 1645  
 So delicat, withouten wo and stryf,  
 That I shal have myn hevene in erthé heere ;  
 For sith that verray hevene is boght so deere,  
 With tribulacioun and greet penaunce,  
 How sholde I thanne, that lyve in swich plesaunce  
 As allé wedded men doon with hire wyvys, 1651  
 Come to the blisse ther Crist eterne on lyve ys ?  
 This is my drede, and ye my brêtheren tweye,  
 Assoilleth me this questioun, I preye."

Justinus, which that hated his folye, 1655  
 Answerde anon right in his japerye ;  
 And for he wolde his longè tale abregge,  
 He woldè noon auctoritee allegge,  
 But seyðe, "Sire, so ther be noon obstácle  
 Oother than this, God of his hygh myrácle, 1660  
 And of his mercy, may so for yow wirche  
 That er ye have youre right of hooly chirche,  
 Ye may repente of wedded mannès lyf,  
 In which ye seyn ther is no wo ne stryf ;

1654. *preye*, H<sup>4</sup> *yow preye*.  
 1661. *mercy*, E *hygh mercy*.

1662. *right*, H *rightes*, Corp.<sup>3</sup>  
*giftes*.

And ellès, God forbedé, but he sente 1665  
 A wedded man hym gracé to repente  
 Wel ofté rather than a sengle man ;  
 And therfore, sire,—the besté reed I kan,—  
 Dispeire yow noght, but have in youre memorie,  
 Paraunter she may be youre purgatorie ; 1670  
 She may be Goddès meene, and Goddès whippe !  
 Thanne shal youre soulé up to hevene skippe  
 Swifter than dooth an arwe out of the bowe.  
 I hope to God herafter shul ye knowe  
 That ther nys no so greet felicitee 1675  
 In mariage, ne nevere mo shal bee,  
 That yow shal lette of youre savacioun,  
 So that ye use, as skile is and resoun,  
 The lustés of youre wyf attempely,  
 And that ye plesé hire nat to amorously, 1680  
 And that ye kepe yow eek from oother synne.  
 My tale is doon, for my witte is thynne ;  
 Beth nat agast her-of, my brother deere,  
 But lat us waden out of this mateere.  
 The Wyf of Bathe, if ye han understonde, 1685  
 Of mariágé, which ye have on honde,  
 Declaréd hath ful wel in litel space.  
 Fareth now wel, God have yow in his grace."

And with this word this Justyn and his brother  
 Han take hir leve, and ech of hem of oother ; 1690  
 For whan they saughe that it moste needis be,  
 They wroghten so, by sly and wys tretee,  
 That she, this mayden, which that Mayus highte,

1686. *have, H han now.* 1691. *needis, om. E.*



As hastily as evere that she myghte,  
 Shal wedded be unto this Januarie. 1695  
 I trowe it were to longé yow to tarie,  
 If I yow tolde of every scrit and bond  
 By which that she was feffed in his lond,  
 Or for to herkennen of hir riche array.  
 But finally y-comen is the day 1700  
 That to the chirché bothé be they went,  
 For to receyve the hooly sacrament.  
 Forth comth the preest, with stole aboute his nekke,  
 And bad hire be lyk Sarra and Rebekke  
 In wysdom and in trouthe of mariáge, 1705  
 And seyde his orisons as is uságe,  
 And croucheth hem and bad God sholde hem  
 blesse,  
 And made al siker ynogh with hoolynesse.  
 Thus been they wedded with solempnitee,  
 And at the feesté sitteth he and she, 1710  
 With othere worthy folk, up on the deys.  
 Al ful of joye and blisse is the paleys,  
 And ful of instrumentz, and of vitaille  
 The moste deyntéuous of all Ytaille.  
 Biforn hem stooode swich instrumentz of soun 1715  
 That Orpheus, ne of Thebés Amphioune,  
 Ne maden nevere swich a melodye.  
 At every cours thanne cam loud mynstralcye  
 That nevere trompéd Joab for to heere,

1698. *feffed in*, invested with.1704. *lyk*, E *lyk to*.1706. *his*, E *hir*.1707. *croucheth*, signs with the cross.1715. *stooode*, etc., E *stooden instruments of swich soun*.

Nor he Theodomas yet half so cleere 1720  
 At Thebés, whan the citee was in doute.  
 Bacus the wyn hem skynketh al aboute,  
 And Venus laugheth upon every wight,  
 For Januarie was bicomme hir knyght,  
 And woldé bothe assayen his coráge 1725  
 In libertee, and eek in mariáge ;  
 And with hire fyrbrond in hire hand aboute  
 Daunceth biforn the bryde and al the route ;  
 And certainly I dar right wel seyn this  
 Yménëus, that god of weddyng is, 1730  
 Saugh nevere his lyf so myrie a wedded man.  
 Hoold thou thy pees, thou poete Marcian,—  
 That writest us that ilké weddyng murie  
 Of hire Philologie and hym Mercurie,  
 And of the songes that the Muses songe,— 1735  
 To smal is bothe thy penne and eek thy tonge,  
 For to descryven of this mariáge,  
 Whan tendré youthe hath wedded stoupyng age ;  
 Ther is swich myrthe that it may nat be writen.  
 Assayeth it youre self, thanne may ye witen 1740  
 If that I lye or noon in this matiere.

Mayus, that sit with so benyngne a chiere,  
 Hire to biholde it semed fairye.  
 Queene Ester looked nevere with swich an eye

1722. Cp. *House of Fame*, l.  
 1245, where Professor  
 Skeat points out that  
 Chaucer takes his men-  
 tion of Theodamas from  
 Statius, *Thebaid*, viii.  
 343.

1732. *Marcian*, Martianus  
 Capella, a writer of the  
 5th century, whose *De  
 Nuptiis Philologiae et  
 Mercurii* was a treatise  
 on the liberal arts in  
 nine books.

On Assuer, so meke a look hath she. 1745  
 I may yow nat devyse al hir beautee,  
 But thus muche of hire beautee telle I may,  
 That she was lyk the brighté morwe of May,  
 Fulfild of allé beautee and plesaunce.

This Januarie is ravysshed in a traunce 1750  
 At every tyme he looked on hir face ;  
 But in his herte he gan hire to manace,  
 That he that nyght in armés wolde hire streyne  
 Harder than evere Parys dide Eleyne ;  
 But nathélees yet hadde he greet pitee 1755  
 That thilké nyght offenden hire moste he ;  
 And thoughte, " Allas ! O tendré créature !  
 Now woldé God ye myghté wel endure  
 Al my corage, it is so sharpe and keene !  
 I am agast ye shul it nat susteene ; 1760  
 But God forbede that I dide al my myght.  
 Now woldé God that it were woxen nyght,  
 And that the nyght wolde lasten everemo.  
 I wolde that al this peple were ago ! "  
 And finally he dooth al his labóur, 1765  
 As he best myghté, savynge his honóur,  
 To haste hem fro the mete in subtil wyse.

The tymé cam that resoun was to ryse,  
 And after that men daunce and drynken faste,  
 And spices al aboute the hous they caste, 1770  
 And ful of joye and blisse is every man,—  
 All but a squyer highté Damyan,  
 Which carf biforn the knyght ful many a day.

1763. *lasten*, H *stonden*.1772. *highte*, H<sup>4</sup> *that hight*.

He was so ravysshed on his lady May  
 That for the verray peyne he was ny wood. 1775  
 Almoost he swelte and swowned ther he stood,  
 So soore hath Venus hurt hym with hire brond  
 As that she bar it daunsynge in hire hond ;  
 And to his bed he wente hym hastily.  
 Namooore of hym as at this tyme speke I, 1780  
 But there I lete hym wepe ynogh and pleyne  
 Til fresshé May wol rewen on his peyne.

O perilous fyr that in the bedstraw bredeth !  
 O famulier foo, that his servyce bedeth !  
 O servant traytour, falsé, hoomly hewe, 1785  
 Lyk to the naddre in bosom, sly, untrewé,  
 God shilde us allé from youre áqueyntance !  
 O Januarie, dronken in plesance  
 In mariáge, se how thy Damyan,  
 Thyn owené squier and thy borné man, 1790  
 Entendeth for to do thee vileynye !  
 God graunté thee thyn hoomly fo tespye,  
 For in this world nys worsé pestilence  
 Than hoomly foo al day in thy presence !

Parfourned hath the sonne his ark diurne, 1795  
 No lenger may the body of hym sojurne

1773. *carf*, carved.1776. *swelte*, fainted.1780. *as*, om. E<sup>6</sup>.*speke*, H *telle*.1781. *wepe*, etc., H *now his too compleyne*.1783. This paragraph is marked *Auctor* in EH<sup>3</sup>.1785. *hoomly hewe*, servant in the house.1786. *naddre*, adder.*sly*, om. H ; Corp.<sup>2</sup> place it after *naddre*.1790. *borne*, E<sup>4</sup> *born*.

On thorisonte, as in that latitude.  
 Night with his mantel, that is derk and rude,  
 Gan oversprede the hemysperie aboute,  
 For which departed is this lusty route 1800  
 Fro Januarie, with thank on every syde.  
 Hoom to hir houses lustily they ryde,  
 Where as they doon hir thyngès as hem leste,  
 And, whan they sye hir tymé, goon to reste.  
 Soone after that this hastif Januarie 1805  
 Wolde go to bedde, he wolde no lenger tarye.  
 He drynketh ypocras, clarree and vernáge,  
 Of spices hoote, tencreessen his coráge ;  
 And many a letuarie hath he ful fyn  
 Swiche as the cursèd monk, Daun Constantyn, 1810  
 Hath writen in his book, *De Coitu* ;  
 To eten hem alle he nas no thyng eschu ;  
 And to hise privee freendès thus seyde he :  
 " For Goddès love, as soone as it may be,  
 Lat voyden al this hous in curteys wyse ; " 1815  
 And they han doon right as he wol devyse.  
 Men drynken and the travers drawe anon ;  
 The bryde was broght a-bedde as stille as stoon,  
 And whan the bed was with the preest y-blessed,  
 Out of the chambre hath every wight hym dressed ;  
 And Januarie hath faste in armès take 1821

1802. *houses*, EH *hous*.1804. *sy*, saw.1807. *vernage*, a strong wine,  
like Malmsey.1809. *letuarie*, electuary.1810. *cursèd*, om. E.*Daun Constantyn*, a  
monk of Monte Cassino.  
Cp. Gen. Prologue, 433.1812. *eschu*, unwilling.1817. *travers*, curtain.

His fressshé May, his paradys, his make.  
 He lulleth hire, he kisseth hire ful ofte,  
 With thikké brustles of his berd unsofte,  
 Lyk to the skyn of houndfyssh, sharpe as brere; 1825  
 For he was shave al newe in his manere.  
 He rubbeth hire aboute hir tendre face  
 And seydé thus, "Allas! I moot trespace  
 To yow, my spouse, and yow greetly offende,  
 Er tymé come that I wil doun descende; 1830  
 But nathélees, considereth this," quod he,  
 "Ther nys no werkman, what so evere he be,  
 That may bothe werké wel and hastily.  
 This wol be doon at leyser parfitly,  
 It is no fors how longé that we pleye; 1835  
 In trewé wedlok coupled be we tweye,  
 And blesséd be the yok that we been inne!  
 For in oure actès we mowe do no synne.  
 A man may do no synné with his wyf,  
 Ne hurte hymselfen with his owene knyf; 1840  
 For we han leve to pleye us, by the lawe."  
 Thus laboureth he til that the day gan dawé,  
 And thanne he taketh a sope in fyne clarree,  
 And upright in his bed thanne sitteth he;  
 And after that he sang ful loude and cleere, 1845  
 And kiste his wyf, and madé wantowne cheere.  
 He was al coltissh, ful of ragerye,  
 And ful of jargon as a flekkéd pye.  
 The slakké skyn aboute his nekké shaketh

1824. *thikke*, E<sup>5</sup> *thilke*.1825. *houndfyssh*, shark.1836. *coupled*, E *wedded*.1838. *oure*, om. EH<sup>4</sup>.

Whil that he sang, so chaunteth he and craketh ;  
But God woot what that May thoughte in hire  
herte 1851

Whan she hym saugh up-sittyng in his sherte,  
In his nyght cappe, and with his nekké lene !  
She preyseth nat his pleyng worth a bene.

Thanne seide he thus, " My resté wol I take ;  
Now day is come, I may no lenger wake ; " 1856  
And doun he leyde his heed and sleepe til  
pryme.

And afterward, whan that he saugh his tyme,  
Up ryseth Januarie, but fresshé May  
Heeld hire chambre unto the fourthé day, 1860  
As usage is of wyvès, for the beste ;  
For every labour som tyme moot han reste,  
Or ellés longé may he nat endure ;  
This is to seyn, no lyvès creature,  
Be it of fyssh, or bryd, or beest, or man. 1865

Now wol I speke of woful Damyan,  
That langwissheth for love, as ye shul heere ;  
Therefore I speke to hym in this manere.

I seye, O sely Damyan, allas !  
Andswere to my demaunde as in this cas. 1870  
How shaltow to thy lady, fresshé May,  
Tellé thy wo ? She wole alwey seye nay.  
Eek if thou speke, she wol thy wo biwreye.  
God be thyn helpe, I kan no bettré seye.

1850. *craketh*, sings hoarsely.1869. Marked *Auctor* in EH<sup>3</sup>.

This sikè Damyan in Venus fyr 1875  
 So brenneth, that he dyeth for desyr ;  
 For which he putte his lyf in aventure.  
 No lenger myghte he in this wise endure,  
 But prively a penner gan he borwe,  
 And in a lettrè wroot he al his sorwe,— 1880  
 In manere of a compleynte or a lay,—  
 Unto his fairè, fresshé lady May ;  
 And in a purs of sylk, heng on his sherte,  
 He hath it put and leyde it at his herte.

The moonè, that at noon was thilke day 1885  
 That Januarie hath wedded fresshé May  
 In two of Tawr, was into Cancre glyden,  
 So longe hath Mayus in hir chambre byden,  
 As custume is unto thise nobles alle.  
 A brydè shal nat eten in the halle 1890  
 Til dayès foure, or thre dayes attè leeste,  
 Y-passed been, thanne lat hire go to feeste.  
 The fourthè day compleet fro noon to noon,  
 Whan that the heighè massè was y-doon,  
 In hallè sit this Januarie and May, 1895  
 As fressh as is the brightè someres day ;  
 And so bifel, how that this goodè man  
 Remembred hym upon this Damyan,  
 And seyde, "Seyntè Marie ! how may this be

1878. *wise*, H *wo*.1879. *penner*, pen-case.1887. *In two of Tawr*, Tyr-whitt proposed to read *ten*, but Mr. Brae has shown that the moon

could pass through Taurus and Gemini into Cancer in four days. He shows this especially for June, but June can hardly be the month. Cp. ll. 2081, 2133, 2222.



That Damyan entendeth nat to me ? 1900  
 Is he ay syk ? or how may this bityde ?  
 Hise squieres, whiche that stooden ther bisyde,  
 Excused hym by cause of his siknesse,  
 Which letted hym to doon his bisynesse,—  
 Noon oother causé myghté make hym tarye. 1905  
 “That me forthynketh,” quod this Januarie,  
 “He is a gentil squier, by my trouthe !  
 If that he deyde, it weré harm and routhe ;  
 He is as wys, discreet, and eek secree,  
 As any man I woot, of his degree ; 1910  
 And therto manly and eek servysable,  
 And for to been a thrifty man right able ;  
 But after mete, as soone as evere I may,  
 I wol myself visite hym, and eek May,  
 To doon hym al the confort that I kan ;” 1915  
 And for that word hym blesséd every man,  
 That of his bountee and his gentillesse  
 He woldé so conforten in siknesse  
 His squier, for it was a gentil dede.  
 “Dame,” quod this Januarie, “taak good hede 1920  
 At after mete ye with youre wommen alle,  
 Whan ye han been in chambre out of this halle,  
 That allé ye go se this Damyan.  
 Dooth hym disport, he is a gentil man,  
 And telleth hym that I wol hym visite, 1925  
 Have I no thyng but rested me a lite ;  
 And spede yow fasté, for I wole abyde

1909. *eeh*, E<sup>2</sup> *as*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *om*.1921. *mete*, E *noon*.1923. *se*, H<sup>5</sup> *to se*, Heng. *to*.

Til that ye slepè fastè by my syde ;"  
 And with that word he gan unto hym calle  
 A squier, that was marchal of his halle, 1930  
 And tolde hym certeyn thyngès, what he wolde.

This fressshè May hath streight hir wey y-holde,  
 With alle hir wommen, unto Damyan.  
 Doun by his beddès syde sit she than,  
 Confortynge hym as goodly as she may. 1935  
 This Damyan, whan that his tyme he say,  
 In secree wise, his purs and eek his bille,  
 In which that he y-writen hadde his wille,  
 Hath put into hire hand, withouten moore,  
 Save that he siketh wonder depe and soore, 1940  
 And softely to hire right thus seyde he :  
 "Mercy ! and that ye nat discovere me,  
 For I am deed, if that this thyng be kyd."  
 This purs hath she inwith hir bosom hyd,  
 And wente hire wey—ye gete namoore of me ; 1945  
 But unto Januarie y-comen is she  
 That on his beddès syde sit ful softe.  
 He taketh hire and kisseth hire ful ofte,  
 And leyde hym doun to slepe, and that anon.  
 She feynéd hire as that she mostè gon 1950  
 Ther as ye woot that every wight moot neede ;  
 And whan she of this bille hath taken heede,  
 She rente it al to cloutès attè laste,  
 And in the pryvee softely it caste.

Who studieth now, but fairè, fressshè May ? 1955

1929. *unto hym*, E<sup>3</sup> *to him to*, 1943. *kyd*, known.  
 Corp.<sup>3</sup> *to him*. 1948. *He*, H<sup>3</sup> *And*.

Adoun by oldé Januarie she lay,  
That sleepe til that the coughe hath hym  
awaked.

Anon he preyde hire strepen hire al naked,  
He wolde of hire, he seyde, han som plesaunce ;  
And seyde hir clothés dide hym encombraunce.  
And she obeyeth, be hire lief or looth ; 1961  
But, lest that precious folk be with me wrooth,  
How that he wroghte I dar nat to yow telle,  
Or wheither hire thoughte it paradys or helle ;  
But heere I lete hem werken in hir wyse, 1965  
Til evensong rong, and than they moste aryse.

Were it by destynee, or áventure,  
Were it by influence or by nature,  
Or constellacioun, that in swich estaat  
The hevene stood, that tyme fortunaat 1970  
Was, for to putte a bille of Venus werkes  
(For alle thyng hath tyme, as seyn thise clerkes)  
To any womman for to get hire love,  
I kan nat seye ; but greté God above  
That knoweth that noon act is causélees, 1975  
He deme of al, for I wole holde my pees ;  
But sooth is this, how that this fressshé May  
Hath také swich impressioun that day,  
For pitee of this siké Damyan,  
That from hire herté she ne dryvé kan 1980  
The remembrancé, for to doon hym ese.

1962. *that*, E<sup>2</sup> *ye*, *the*.

*wheither* ; H<sup>4</sup> go wrong  
altogether.

1964. Text from Camb. ; E  
*wheither that for*

1966. *than*, E<sup>3</sup> *that*.

1979. *For*, H<sup>3</sup> *Of*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *On*.

"Certeyn," thoghte she, "whom that this thyng  
displese

I rekké noght, for heere I hym assure  
To love hym best of any creäture,  
Though he namooré haddé than his sherte." 1985  
Lo, pitee renneth soone in gentil herte !

Heere may ye se how excellent franchise  
In wommen is whan they hem narwe avyse.  
Som tyrant is, as ther be many oon,  
That hath an herte as hard as any stoon, 1990  
Which wolde han lat hym storven in the place,  
Wel rather than han graunted hym hire grace ;  
And hem rejoysen in hire crueel pryde,  
And rekké nat to been an homycide.

This gentil May, fulfilled of pitee, 1995  
Right of hire hand a lettré madé she,  
In which she graunteth hym hire verray grace.  
Ther lakketh noght, oonly but day and place  
Wher that she myghte unto his lust suffise,  
For it shal be right as he wole devyse ; 2000  
And whan she saugh hir tyme, upon a day,  
To visité this Damyan gooth May,  
And sotilly this lettré doun she threste  
Under his pilwe, rede it if hym leste !  
She taketh hym by the hand and harde hym twiste,  
So secrély that no wight of it wiste, 2006  
And bad hym been al hool ; and forth she wente  
To Januarie, whan that he for hire sente.

1988. *narwe avyse*, take close  
counsel.

1990. *as any*, H<sup>2</sup> *as is a*.

1998. *oonly but*, H<sup>2</sup> *but oonly*.  
2007, 2008. *she . . . hire*, E  
*he . . . hym*.

Up riseth Damyan the nexté morwe ;  
 Al passéd was his siknesse and his sorwe. 2010  
 He kembeth hym, he preyneth hym and pyketh,  
 He dooth al that his lady lust and lyketh ;  
 And eek to Januarie he gooth as lowe  
 As evere dide a doggè for the bowe.  
 He is so plesant unto every man,— 2015  
 For craft is al, whoso that do it kan,—  
 That every wight is fayn to speke hym good,  
 And fully in his lady grace he stood.  
 Thus lete I Damyan aboute his nede,  
 And in my talé forth I wol procede. 2020

Somme clerkés holden that felicitee  
 Stant in delit, and therfore certeyn he,  
 This noble Januarie with al his myght,  
 In honeste wyse, as longeth to a knyght,  
 Shoope hym to lyvè ful deliciously. 2025  
 His housyng, his array, as honestly  
 To his degree was makèd as a kynges.  
 Amongés othere of hise honeste thynges  
 He made a gardyn wallèd al with stoon.  
 So fair a gardyn woot I nowher noon, 2030  
 For out of doute, I verrailly suppose  
 That he that wroot the Romance of the Rose  
 Ne koude of it the beautee wel devyse ;  
 Ne Priapus ne myghté nat suffise,  
 Though he be god of gardyns, for to telle 2035

2011. *preyneth and pyketh*,  
 preens and smartens.  
 2014. *for the bowe*, a dog used  
 in shooting.

2018. *lady*, the possessive case.  
 2021. *Somme clerkés*, cp.  
 General Prologue, 337,  
 338.

The beautee of the gardyn, and the welle  
 That stood under a laurer, alwey grene.  
 Ful ofté tyme he Pluto, and his queene  
 Proserpina, and al hire fáirye,  
 Disporten hem and maken melodye 2040  
 Aboute that welle, and dauncéd as men tolde.

This noble knyght, this Januarie the olde,  
 Swich deyntee hath in it to walke and pleye  
 That he wol no wight suffren bere the keye,  
 Save he hymself, for of the smale wykét 2045  
 He baar alwey of silver a clykét,  
 With which, whan that hym leste, he it unshette ;  
 And whan he woldé paye his wyf hir dette  
 In somer sesoun, thider wolde he go,  
 And May his wyf, and no wight but they two, 2050  
 And thyngés whiche that were nat doon a bedde  
 He in the gardyn parfourned hem and spedde ;  
 And in this wysé many a murye day  
 Lyvéd this Januarie and fressshé May ;  
 But worldly joyé may nat alwey dure 2055  
 To Januarie, ne to no creäture.

O sodeyn hape ! O thou Fortune instable !  
 Lyk to the scorpion so deceyvable  
 That flaterest with thyn heed whan thou wolt  
 styngge ;  
 Thy tayl is deeth, thurgh thyn envenymyng ! 2060  
 O brotil joye ! O sweeté venym queynte !

2046. *clyket*, latch-key.  
 2055. *dure*, H<sup>4</sup> *endure*.

2057 *sqg*. Marked *Auctor* in E<sup>2</sup>.  
 2059. *stynge*, E *synge* !

O monstre, that so subtilly kanst peynte  
 Thy giftés, under hewe of stidefastnesse,  
 That thou deceyvest bothé moore and lesse,  
 Why hastow Januarie thus deceyved, 2065  
 That haddest hym for thy ful freend receyved?  
 And now thou hast biraft hym bothe hise eyen,  
 For sorwe of which desireth he to dyen.

Allas! this noble Januarie free,  
 Amydde his lust and his prosperitee, 2070  
 Is woxen blynd, and that al sodeynly!  
 He wepeth and he wayleth pitously,  
 And therwithal the fyr of jalousie—  
 Lest that his wyf sholde falle in som folye—  
 So brente his herté, that he woldé fayn 2075  
 That som man bothé hym and hire had slayn;  
 For neither after his deeth nor in his lyf,  
 Ne wolde he that she weré love ne wyf,  
 But evere lyve as wydwe in clothés blake,  
 Soul as the turtle that lost hath hire make. 2080

But atté laste, after a monthe or tweye,  
 His sorwe gan aswagé, sooth to seye,  
 For whan he wiste it may noon oother be  
 He paciently took his adversitee,  
 Save, out of douté, he may nat forgoon 2085  
 That he nas jalous everemoore in oon.  
 Which jalousye it was so outrageous,  
 That neither in hallé, nyn noon oother hous,

2074. *som*, E *swich*.2080. *lost hath*, Camb.<sup>4</sup> *hath lost*.2088. *nyn*, nor in.

Ne in noon oother placé neverthemo,  
 He noldé suffrè hire to ryde or go, 2090  
 But if that he had hond on hire alway ;  
 For which ful ofté wepeth fressshé May,  
 That loveth Damyan so benyngnely  
 That she moot outhér dyen sodeynly,  
 Or ellés she moot han hym as hir leste ; 2095  
 She wayteth whan hir herté woldé breste.

Upon that oother sydé Damyan  
 Bicomén is the sorwéfullesté man  
 That evere was, for neither nyght ne day  
 Ne myghte he speke a word to fressshé May, 2100  
 As to his purpos, of no swich mateere,  
 But if that Januarie moste it heere,  
 That hadde an hand upon hire everemo ;  
 But nathélees, by wrytyng to and fro,  
 And privee signés, wiste he what she mente, 2105  
 And she knew eek the fyn of his entente.

O Januarie ! what myghte it thee availle  
 Thogh thou myghtest se as fer as shippés saille ?  
 For al-so good is blynd deceyvéd be  
 As to be deceyvéd whan a man may se. 2110

Lo Argus, which that hadde an hondred eyen,  
 For al that evere he koudé poure or pryen,  
 Yet was he blent, and, God woot, so been mo,

2089. *Ne in*, E *Nyn*.2090. *to*, E<sup>4</sup> *for to*.2100. *to*, H<sup>2</sup> *with*.2106. *fyn*, sum.2107 *sqq*. Marked *Auctor* in E.2109. *al-so*, EH<sup>6</sup> *as*.2113. *blent*, blinded, deceived.*and*, H<sup>2</sup> *as*.



That wenen wisly that it be nat so ;  
 " Passe-over is an ese,"—I sey namoore. 2115

This fresshé May, that I spak of so yooore,  
 In warm wex hath emprented the clykét  
 That Januarie bar of the smale wykét,  
 By which into his gardyn ofte he wente ;  
 And Damyán, that knew al hire entente, 2120  
 The kliket countréfeted pryvely.  
 Ther nys namoore to seye ; but hastily  
 Som wonder by this clyket shal bityde,  
 Which ye shul heeren, if ye wole abyde.

O noble Ovyde ! ful sooth seystou, God woot,  
 What sleighte is it, thogh it be long and hoot, 2126  
 That he nyl fynde it out in som manere.  
 By Piramus and Tesbee may men leere,  
 Thogh they were kept ful longe streite overal,  
 They been accorded, rownynge thurgh a wal, 2130  
 Ther no wight koude han founde out swich a  
 sleighte.

But now to purpos,—er that dayès eighte  
 Were passéd er the monthe of Juyn bifille,  
 That Januarie hath caught so greet a wille,  
 Thurgh eggyng of his wyf, hym for to pleye 2135  
 In his gardyn, and no wight but they tweye,  
 That in a morwe unto this May seith he,

2125 *sqg.* Marked *Auctor* in E.  
*ful*, H<sup>2</sup> *wel*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> om.  
 2130. *ronnyng*, whispering.

2133. *Juyn*, MSS. *Juy*, but see  
 l. 2222 ; the mistake may  
 be Chaucer's.

"Rys up, my wyf, my love, my lady free !  
 The turtle voys is herd, my dowvè sweete,  
 The wynter is goon with his reynès weete ; 2140  
 Com forth now with thyne eyen columbyn !  
 How fairer been thy brestes than is wyn !  
 The gardyn is enclosed al aboute ;  
 Com forth, my whitè spousè ! out of doute  
 Thou hast me wounded in myn herte, O wyf ! 2145  
 No spot of thee ne knew I al my lyf ;  
 Come forth, and lat us taken som disport ;  
 I chees thee for my wyf and my confort !"  
 Swiche oldè lewéd wordés used he.

On Damyan a signè madè she, 2150  
 That he sholde go biforn with his klikét.  
 This Damyan thanne hath opened the wykét,  
 And in he stirte, and that in swich manere  
 That no wight myght it se, neither y-heere ;  
 And stille he sit under a bussh anon. 2155

This Januarie, as blynd as is a stoon,  
 With Mayus in his hand and no wight mo,  
 Into his fressshè gardyn is ago,  
 And claptè to the wyket sodeynly.

"Now, wyf," quod he, "heere nys but thou  
 and I, 2160  
 That art the creäture that I best love ;  
 For, by that Lord that sit in hevene above,  
 Levere ich hadde to dyen on a knyf,

2138. January had been reading the *Song of Solomon*.

2141. *columbyn*, dove-like.

2144. *white*, H *sweete*.

2147. *som*, H<sup>6</sup> *oure*.

Than thee offendé, trewé, deeré wyf.  
 For Goddès saké, thenk how I thee chees 2165  
 Noght for no coveitisé doutélees,  
 But oonly for the love I had to thee ;  
 And though that I be oold and may nat see,  
 Beth to me trewe, and I shal telle yow why.  
 Thre thyngés, certés, shal ye wynne therby ; 2170  
 First, love of Crist, and to youre self honour,  
 And al myn heritagé, toun and tour ;  
 I geve it yow ; maketh chartres as yow leste.  
 This shal be doon tomorwe er sonné reste,  
 So wisly God my soulé brynge in blisse ! 2175  
 I prey yow first in covenat ye me kisse,  
 And though that I be jalous, wyte me noght.  
 Ye been so depe enprented in my thought,  
 That whan that I considere youre beautee,  
 And therwithal the unlikly elde of me, 2180  
 I may nat, certés, though I sholdé dye,  
 Forbere to been out of youre compaignye ;  
 For verray love this is, withouten doute.  
 Now kys me, wyf, and lat us rome aboute."

This fressshé May, whan she thise wordés herde,  
 Benyngnely to Januarie answerde ; 2186  
 But first and forward, she bigan to wepe ;  
 " I have," quod she, " a soulé for to kepe  
 As wel as ye, and also myn honóur ;  
 And of my wyfhod thilké tendré flour 2190  
 Which that I have assuréd in youre hond,

2176. *covenat*, H<sup>6</sup> *covenaunt*.2177. *wyte*, blame.2179. *that* (2), om. E.2185. *thise*, H *his*.

Whan that the preest to yow my body bond ;  
Wherefore I wole answere in this manere,  
By the leve of yow, my lord so deere ;  
I prey to God that nevere dawe the day 2195  
That I ne sterve, as foule as womman may,  
If evere I do unto my kyn that shame,  
Or ellès I empeyrè so my name,  
That I be fals ; and if I do that lakke,  
Do strepè me, and put me in a sakke, 2200  
And in the nextè ryver do me drenche,—  
I am a gentil womman and no wenche !  
Why speke ye thus ? But men been evere  
untrewe,  
And wommen have repreve of yow ay newe.  
Ye han noon oother contenance, I leeve, 2205  
But speke to us of untrust and repreeve.”  
And with that word she saugh wher Damyan  
Sat in the bussh, and coughen she bigan,  
And with hir fynger signès madè she  
That Damyan sholde clymbe upon a tree 2210  
That chargéd was with fruyt, and up he wente ;  
For verrailly he knew al hire entente,  
And every signè that she koudè make  
Wel bet than Januarie, hir owenè make ;  
For in a lettrè she hadde toold hym al 2215  
Of this matéré, how he werchen shal ;  
And thus I lete hym sitte upon the pyrie,  
And Januarie and May romyngè myrie.

Bright was the day, and blew the firmament ;

2196. *sterve*, die.

2217. *pyrie*, pear-tree.

Phebus of gold doun hath hise stremés sent 2220  
 To gladen every flour with his warmnesse.  
 He was that tyme in Geminis, as I gesse,  
 But litel fro his declynacioun  
 Of Cancer, Jovis exaltacioun ;  
 And so bifel, that brighté morwé tyde, 2225  
 That in that gardyn, in the ferther syde,  
 Pluto, that is the kyng of fairye,  
 And many a lady in his compaignye,  
 Folwynge his wyf, the queené Proserpyne,  
 Ech after oother right as ony lyne,— 2230  
 Whil that she gadered flourés in the mede,  
 In Claudyan ye may the stories rede,  
 How in hise grisely carté he hire fette.  
 This kyng of fairye thanne adoun hym sette  
 Upon a bench of turvés, fressh and grene, 2235  
 And right anon thus seyde he to his queene :  
 “ My wyf,” quod he, “ ther may no wight seye  
 nay,  
 Thexperience so preveth every day  
 The tresons whiche that wommen doon to man.  
 Ten hondred thousand [tales] tellen I kan 2240  
 Notable of youre untrouthe and brotilnesse.

2220. Text from Corp.<sup>3</sup>; EH<sup>4</sup>  
*Phebus hath of gold hise  
 stremes doun of-sent  
 (sent).*

2222. The sun would pass from  
 Gemini into Cancer  
 about June 11 or 12,  
 attaining at that time  
 its greatest northern  
 declination.

2227. *the*, om. EH<sup>3</sup>.

2230. *ony*, from Camb.; E a;  
 H as (*right as*) a; the  
 other MSS. go wrong  
 altogether.

2232. *In Claudyan*, i.e. in the  
*De Raptu Proserpinas.*

2233. *How*, E<sup>3</sup> *And*.  
*fette*, E<sup>3</sup> *sette*.

2241. *brotilnesse*, brittleness.

O Salomon ! wys, and richest of riches,  
 Fulfild of sapience and of worldly glorie,  
 Ful worthy been thy wordès to mémorie  
 To every wight that wit and reson kan ! 2245  
 Thus preiseth he yet the bountee of man :  
 ' Amonges a thousand men yet foond I oon,  
 Bút of wommen allé foond I noon.'

"Thus seith the kyng that knoweth youre  
 wikkednesse,  
 And Jhesus *filius* Syrak, as I gesse, 2250  
 Ne speketh of yow but seeldé reverence.  
 A wyldé fyr and corrupt pestilence  
 So falle upon youre bodyes yet to nyght !  
 Ne se ye nat this honorable knyght ?  
 By-cause, allas ! that he is blynd and old 2255  
 His owené man shal make hym cokéwold.  
 Lo, heere he sit, the lechour, in the tree !  
 Now wol I graunten of my magestee  
 Unto this oldé, blyndé, worthy knyght,  
 That he shal have ageyn hise eyen syght, 2260  
 Whan that his wyf wold doon hym vileynye.  
 Thanne shal he knowen al hire harlotrye  
 Bothe in repreve of hire and othere mo."

"Ye shal ?" quod Proserpyne ; "and wol ye so ?  
 Now by my moodres sirès soule ! I swere 2265  
 That I shal geven hire suffisant answere,  
 And allé wommen after, for hir sake,

2247. See Ecclesiastes vii. 29.

2251. *seelde*, seldom.

2264. *and*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

2265. *moodres sires soule*, i.e. Saturn's, but *sires* is probably a blunder for *Ceres*.

That though they be in any gilt y-take,  
 With facé boold they shulle hemself excuse,  
 And bere hem doun that wolden hem accuse ; 2270  
 For lakke of answeere noon of hem shal dyen.  
 Al hadde man seyn a thyng with bothe hise eyen,  
 Yit shul we wommen visage it hardily,  
 And wepe, and swere, and chidè subtilly,  
 So that ye men shul been as lewed as gees. 2275  
 What rekketh me of youre auctoritees ?

“ I woot wel that this Jew, this Salomon,  
 Foond of us wommen foolès many oon,  
 But though that he ne foond no good womman,  
 Yet hath ther foundè many another man 2280  
 Wommen ful trewe, ful goode and vertuous ;  
 Witnesse on hem that dwelle in Cristès hous ;  
 With martirdom they prevèd hire constance.  
 The Romain Geestès eek make remembrance  
 Of many a verray trewé wyf also ; 2285  
 But, sire, ne be nat wrooth,—al be it so,  
 Though that he seyde he foond no good womman,  
 I prey yow take the sentence of the man,  
 He mentè thus, that in sovereyn bontee  
 Nis noon but God that sit in Trinitee. 2290  
 Ey, for verray God, that nys but oon,  
 What maké ye so muche of Salomon ?  
 What though he made a temple, Goddès hous ?  
 What though he weré riche and glorious ?  
 So made he eek a temple of falsè goddis. 2295

2272. *eyen*, H<sup>2</sup> have the correct  
 spelling for the rime, *yēn*.

2274. *chide*, E repeats *visage*.

How myghte he do a thyng that moore forbode is?  
*Pardee!* as faire as ye his name emplastre  
 He was a lecchour and an ydolastre,  
 And in his elde he verray God forsook;  
 And if that God ne hadde, as seith the book, 2300  
 Y-sparéd for his fadres sake, he sholde  
 Have lost his regné rather than he wolde.  
 I sette right noght, of al the vileynye  
 That ye of wommen write, a boterflye!  
 I am a womman, nedès moot I speke, 2305  
 Or ellès swellè til myn hertè breke;  
 For sithen he seyde that we been jangleresses,  
 As evere hool I mootè brouke my tresses!  
 I shal nat sparé for no curteisye  
 To speke hym harm that wolde us vileynye!" 2310  
 "Dame," quod this Pluto, "be no lenger wrooth,  
 I geve it up! but sith I swoor myn ooth  
 That I wolde graunten hym his sighte ageyn,  
 My word shal stonde, I warnè yow certeyn.  
 I am a kyng, it sit me noght to lye!" 2315  
 "And I," quod she, "a queene of faïery!  
 Hir answeere shal she have, I undertake.  
 Lat us namooré wordés heer-of make,  
 For sothe I wol no lenger yow contrarie."  
 Now lat us turne agayn to Januarie, 2320  
 That in the gardyn with his fairè May  
 Syngeth ful murier than the papèjay:

2300. *if that*, E<sup>3</sup> *if*.2301. *Y-spared*, H<sup>5</sup> *I-spared*  
*him*.2302. *rather*, earlier.2308. *brouke*, have the use of.2315. *sit*, fits.2322. *papejay*, parrot.



"Yow love I best, and shal, and oother noon."  
So longe aboute the aleyes is he goon,  
Til he was come agayns thilkè pyrie 2325  
Where as this Damyan sitteth ful myrie,  
Anheigh among the fresshé levès grene.

This fresshé May, that is so bright and sheene,  
Gan for to syke and seyde, "Allas, my syde !  
Now, sire," quod she, "for aught that may bityde,  
I moste han of the perès that I see, 2331  
Or I moot dye, so soorè longeth me  
To eten of the smalè perès grene.  
Help, for hir love that is of hevené queene !  
I telle yow wel, a womman in my plit 2335  
May han to fruyt so greet an appetit  
That she may dyen, but she of it have."

"Allas!" quod he, "that I ne had heer a knave  
That koudè clymbe ! Allas, alas !" quod he,  
"That I am blynd !" "Ye, sire, no fors," quod she ;  
"But wolde ye vouchè-sauf, for Goddès sake, 2341  
The pyrie inwith youre armès for to take,—  
For wel I woot that ye mystrustè me,—

Thanne sholde I clymbè wel ynogh," quod she,  
"So I my foot myghte sette upon youre bak." 2345

"Certès," quod he, "theron shal be no lak,  
Mighte I yow helpen with myn hertè blood !"  
He stoupeth down, and on his bak she stood,  
And caughte hire by a twiste, and up she gooth,—  
Ladies, I prey yow that ye be nat wrooth, 2350  
I kan nat glose, I am a rudè man,—

2325. *pyrie*, pear-tree.2349. *twiste*, branch.

And sodeynly anon this Damyan  
Gan pullen up the smok, and in he throng.

And whan that Pluto saugh this gretè wrong,  
To Januarie he gaf agayn his sighte, 2355

And made hym se as wel as evere he myghte ;  
And whan that he hadde caught his sighte agayn,  
Ne was ther nevere man of thyng so fayn ;

But on his wyf his thought was everemo.

Up to the tree he caste hise eyen two, 2360

And saugh that Damyan his wyf had dressed  
In swich manere it may nat been expressed,

But if I woldé speke uncurteisly ;

And up he gaf a roryng and a cry, 2364

As dooth the mooder whan the child shal dye.

"Out ! helpe ! allas ! harrow !" he gan to crye ;

"O strongé lady, stooré, what dostow ?"

And she answerdé, "Sire, what eyleth yow ?

Have pacience and resoun in youre mynde. 2369

I have yow holpe on bothe youre eyen blynde,—

Up peril of my soule, I shal nat lyen,—

As me was taught to heelé with youre eyen,

Was no thyng bet to maké yow to see

Than strugle with a man upon a tree.

God woot, I dide it in ful good entente." 2375

"Strugle," quod he, "ye, algate in it wente !

God geve yow bothe on shamés deth to dyen !

He swyvéd thee, I saugh it with myne eyen,

And ellès be I hangéd by the hals !"

2355. *agayn his sighte*, H<sup>8</sup> *his sight*  
*agayn*, omitting next couplet.

2367. *stoore*, stubborn.  
2379. *hals*, neck.

"Thanne is," quod she, "my medicyné fals,  
 For certainly, if that ye myghté se, 2381  
 Ye wolde nat seyn this wordés unto me ;  
 Ye han som glymsyng, and no parfit sighte."

"I se," quod he, "as wel as evere I myghte,  
 Thonkéd be God ! with bothe myne eyen two, 2385  
 And, by my trouthe, me thoughte he dide thee so."

"Ye mazé, mazé, goodé sire," quod she ;  
 "This thank have I for I have maad yow see.  
 Allas !" quod she, "that evere I was so kynde."

"Now, damé," quod he, "lat al passe out of  
 mynde. 2390

Com doun, my lief, and if I have myssayd,  
 God helpe me so, as I am yvele apayd.  
 But, by my fader soule ! I wende han seyn  
 How that this Damyan hadde by thee leyn, 2394  
 And that thy smok hadde leyn upon his brest."

"Ye, sire," quod she, "ye may wene as yow lest,  
 But, sire, a man that waketh out of his sleepe,  
 He may nat sodeynly wel taken keepe  
 Upon a thyng, ne seen it parfitly,  
 Til that he be adawéd verraily. 2400

Right so a man that longe hath blynd y-be,  
 Ne may nat sodeynly so wel y-se,  
 First whan his sighte is newé come ageyn,  
 As he that hath a day or two y-seyn.  
 Til that youre sighte y-satled be a while, 2405

2392. *yvele apayd*, ill satisfied,  
 sorry.

2395. *his*, H<sup>4</sup> *thy*.

2400. *adawed*, awakened.

2405. *y-satled*, H<sup>5</sup> *y-stablid*.

Ther may ful many a sighté yow bigile.  
 Beth war, I prey yow, for, by hevené kyng,  
 Ful many a man weneth to seen a thyng,  
 And it is al another than it semeth.  
 He that mysconceyveh, he mysdemeth,"— 2410  
 And with that word she leepe doun fro the tree.

This Januarie, who is glad but he?  
 He kisseth hire and clippeth hire ful ofte,  
 And on hire wombe he stroketh hire ful softe;  
 And to his palays hoom he hath hire lad. 2415  
 Now, goodé men, I pray yow to be glad.  
 Thus endeth heere my tale of Januarie.  
 God blesse us, and his mooder Seinté Marie!

"Ey, Goddés mercy," seyde oure Hosté tho,  
 "Now swich a wyf, I pray God kepe me fro! 2420  
 Lo, whiché sleightés and subtilitees  
 In wommen been! for ay as bisy as bees  
 Been they, us sely men for to deceyve;  
 And from a sooth evere wol they weyve.  
 By this Marchauntés tale it preveth weel; 2425  
 But doutélees, as trewe as any steel  
 I have a wyf, though that she pouré be;  
 But of hir tonge a labbyng shrewe is she;

2413. *clippeth*, hugs.

2416. *to*, om. E.

2419. E heads this *The Prologe of the Squieres Tale*, printing with it the first eight lines of Group

F. Camb., Corp. and  
Lansd. omit.

2419. *Hoste*, E<sup>4</sup> *Hoost*, etc.

2421. *subtilitees*, E<sup>4</sup> *subtiltees*.

2424. *weyve*, depart.

And yet she hath an heepe of vicès mo,  
Therof no fors, lat alle swiche thyngès go ; 2430  
But wyte ye what ? In conseil be it seyde,  
Me reweth soore I am unto hire teyd ;  
For, and I sholdè rekenen every vice  
Which that she hath, y-wis I were to nyce ;  
And causè why, it sholde reported be, 2435  
And toold to hire of somme of this meynce,  
Of whom it nedeth nat for to declare  
(Syn wommen konnen outen swich chaffare),  
And eek my wit suffiseth nat therto,  
To tellen al, wherfore my tale is do." 2440

2438. *outen*, publish.

2438. *chaffare*, business.

## TALES OF THE FOURTH DAY

### GROUP F

#### *Words of the Host to the Squire*

"SQUIER, come neer, if it youre willè be,  
And sey somwhat of love ; for certès ye  
Konnen theron as muche as any man."

"Nay, sire," quod he, "but I wol seye as I kan  
With hertly wyl,—for I wol nat rebelle 5  
Agayn youre lust. A talè wol I telle.  
Have me excusèd, if I speke amys,  
My wyl is good, and lo, my tale is this."

### SQUIRE'S TALE

#### *Heere bigynneth The Squieres Tale*

At Sarraz, in the land of Tartarye,  
Ther dwelte a kyng that werreyed Russye, 10

1. *Squier*, H *Sir Squier* ;  
Heng., Pet. *Sire Franke-*  
*leyn*. Camb., Corp. and  
Lansd. omit these lines.
2. *sey somwhat of love*, H say  
us a tale.  
*Squire's Tale*: Keightley in his  
*Tales and Popular*

*Fictions* (1834) suggested that  
the local colour of this Tale was  
derived from Marco Polo, and  
Col. Yule notes that Cambyus-  
can is only a corruption of  
Chinghiz (or "the great")  
Khan. Dr. Skeat has quoted  
passages from Marco Polo's

Thurgh which ther dydè many a doughty man.  
 This noble kyng was clepèd Cambyuskan,  
 Which in his tyme was of so greet renoun  
 That ther was nowher in no regioun  
 So excellent a lord in allè thyng. 15  
 Hym lakkèd noght that longeth to a kyng ;  
 As of the secte of which that he was born,  
 He kepte his lay, to which that he was sworn ;  
 And therto he was hardy, wys, and riche,  
 Pitous and just, and evermore yliche ; 20  
 Sooth of his word, benigne and honorable,  
 Of his coráge as any centre stable ;  
 Yong, fressh, and strong, in armès desirous  
 As any bachelor of al his hous.  
 A fair persone he was, and fortunat, 25  
 And kepte alwey so wel roial estat  
 That ther was nowher swich another man.  
 This noble kyng, this Tartre Cambyuskan,  
 Haddè two sones on Elpheta his wyf,  
 Of whichè the eldeste hightè Algarsyf ; 30  
 That oother sone was clepèd Cambalo.  
 A doghter hadde this worthy kyng also

description of Kublai Khan  
 as the sources of some of  
 Chaucer's lines, but the re-  
 semblances are not very  
 close. On magic horses,  
 rings and mirrors Mr. Clous-  
 ton has written a whole  
 book for the Chaucer  
 Society.

16. *longeth*, H<sup>5</sup> *longed*.

17. *As*, E *And*.

18. *lay*, creed ; H<sup>2</sup> *lawe*.

20. Text from Heng. ; rest *and pitous and just alwey yliche*.

23. *and strong*, E *strong and*.

31. *sone*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

*cleped*, H<sup>2</sup> *i-cleped*.

*Cambalo*, Keightley suggests that the name was taken from Kublai Khan's capital, Cambaluc.

That yongest was, and highté Canacee,  
 But for to tellé yow al hir beautee  
 It lyth nat in my tonge nyn my konnyng, 35  
 I dar nat undertake so heigh a thyng ;  
 Myn Englissh eek is insufficient ;  
 It mosté been a rethor excellent,  
 That koude hise colours longynge for that art,  
 If he sholde hire discryven every part ; 40  
 I am noon swich, I moot speke as I kan.

And so bifel that whan this Cambyuskan  
 Hath twenty wynter born his diademe,  
 As he was wont fro yeer to yeer, I deme,  
 He leet the feeste of his nativitee 45  
 Doon cryen thurghout Sarray his citee,  
 The last Idus of March after the yeer.

Phebus, the sonne, ful joly was and cleer,  
 For he was neigh his exaltacioun  
 In Martés face, and in his mansioun 50  
 In Aries, the colerik hooté signe.  
 Ful lusty was the weder and benigne,  
 For which the foweles agayn the sonnè sheene,  
 What for the sesoun and the yongè grene,  
 Ful loudè songen hire affeccions, 55  
 Hem semed han geten hem protecciouns  
 Agayn the swerd of wynter, keene and coold.

38. *It, E I, H He.*

39. *colours*, ornaments of style.

47. *The last Idus*, March 15,  
 on this day the sun would  
 be in the 4th degree of  
 Aries, approaching his  
 highest exaltation in the

19th degree. The first  
 ten degrees of Aries were  
 called the face of Mars.  
 See Skeat's ed. of the  
*Astrolabe*.

50. *his*, i.e. of Mars.



This Cambyuskan—of which I have yow  
toold—

In roial vestiment sit on his deys,  
With diademe ful heighe in his paleys, 60  
And halt his feeste so solempne and so ryche,  
That in this world ne was ther noon it lyche ;  
Of which, if I shal tellen al tharray,  
Thanne wolde it occupie a someres day ;  
And eek it nedeth nat for to devyse 65  
At every cours the ordre of hire servyse.  
I wol nat tellen of hir strangé sewes,  
Ne of hir swannes, ne of hire heronsewes.  
Eek in that lond, as tellen knyghtés olde,  
Ther is som mete that is ful deynté holde 70  
That in this lond men recche of it but smal ;  
Ther nys no man that may reporten al.

I wol nat taryen yow, for it is pryme,  
And for it is no fruyt, but los of tyme ;  
Unto my purpos I wole have my recours. 75

And so bifel that after the thridde cours,  
Whil that this kyng sit thus in his nobleye,  
Herknyng his mynstralés hir thyngés pleye  
Biforn hym at the bord deliciously,  
In at the hallé dore, al sodeynly, 80  
Ther cam a knyght upon a steede of bras,  
And in his hand a brood mirour of glas ;  
Upon his thombe he hadde of gold a ring,  
And by his syde a naked swerd hangyng ;

61. *halt*, holdeth.

67. *sewes*, dishes.

68. *heronsewes*, young herons.

75. *purpos*, Corp.<sup>2</sup> *first purpos*, E<sup>4</sup> *firste*.

And up he rideth to the heighé bord. 85  
 In al the halle ne was ther spoken a word,  
 For merveille of this knyght ; hym to biholde  
 Ful bisily ther wayten yonge and olde.

This strangé knyght that cam thus sodeynly,  
 Al arméd, save his heed, ful richély, 90  
 Saleweth kyng and queene, and lordés alle,  
 By ordre, as they seten in the halle,  
 With so heigh reverence and obeisaunce,  
 As wel in speché as in contenaunce,  
 That Gawayn with his oldé curteisye, 95  
 Though he were comen ageyn out of fairye,  
 Ne koude hym nat amendé with a word ;  
 And after this, biforn the heighé bord,  
 He with a manly voys seith his message  
 After the forme uséd in his langage, 100  
 Withouten vice of silable, or of lettre ;  
 And for his talé sholdé seme the bettre,  
 Accordant to hise wordés was his cheere,  
 As techeth art of speche hem that it leere.  
 Al be it that I kan nat sowne his stile, 105  
 Ne kan nat clymben over so heigh a style,  
 Yet seye I this, as to commune entente,  
 Thus muche amounteth al that evere he mente,  
 If it so be that I have it in mynde.

He seyde, " The kyng of Arabe and of Inde,  
 My ligé lord, on this solempné day 111  
 Saleweth yow, as he best kan and may,

93. *obeisaunce*, H *observaunce*.

96. *were*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

99. *seith*, H<sup>8</sup> *sayd*.

105. *sowne*, sound.

And sendeth yow, in honour of youre feeste,  
 By me that am al redy at youre heeste,  
 This steede of bras, that esily and weel 115  
 Kan in the space of o day natureel,—  
 This is to seyn, in foure and twenty houres,—  
 Wher so yow lyst, in droghte or ellés shoures,  
 Beren youre body into every place  
 To which youre herté wilneth for to pace, 120  
 Withouten wem of yow, thurgh foul or fair ;  
 Or, if yow lyst to fleen as hye in the air  
 As dooth an egle whan hym list to soore,  
 This samé steede shal bere yow evere moore,  
 Withouten harm, til ye be ther yow leste, 125  
 Though that ye slepen on his bak, or reste ;  
 And turne ageyn with writhyng of a pyn.  
 He that it wroghté koude ful many a gyn.  
 He wayted many a constellacioun  
 Er he had doon this operacioun, 130  
 And knew ful many a seel, and many a bond.  
 “This mirrour eek, that I have in myn hond,  
 Hath swich a myght that men may in it see  
 Whan ther shal fallen any adversitee  
 Unto youre regne, or to youre self also, 135  
 And openly who is youre freend or foo ;  
 And over al this, if any lady bright  
 Hath set hire herte on any maner wight,

114. *al redy at youre, H redy*  
*at al his.*

118. *elles, H<sup>4</sup> in.*

121. *wem, spot, harm.*

123. *whan, E whan that.*

128. *gyn, contrivance.*

129. *wayted, watched.*

138. *on, E<sup>2</sup> in.*

If he be fals she shal his tresoun see,  
 His newé love, and al his subtiltee, 140  
 So openly that ther shal no thyng hyde.  
 Wherefore, ageyn this lusty someres tyde,  
 This mirour and this ryng that ye may see  
 He hath sent to my lady Canacee,  
 Youre excellenté doghter that is heere. 145

"The vertu of the ryng, if ye wol heere,  
 Is this, that if hire lust it for to were  
 Upon hir thombe, or in hir purs it bere,  
 Ther is no fowel that fleeth under the hevene  
 That she ne shal wel understonde his stevene, 150  
 And knowe his menyng openly and pleyn,  
 And answeere hym in his langage ageyn ;  
 And every gras that groweth upon roote  
 She shal eek knowe and whom it wol do boote,  
 Al be hise woundés never so depe and wyde. 155

"This naked swerd that hangeth by my syde  
 Swich vertu hath that what man so ye smyte,  
 Thurgh out his armure it wole kerve and byte,  
 Were it as thikke as is a branchéd ook ;  
 And what man that is wounded with the strook 160  
 Shal never be hool, til that yow list of grace  
 To stroke hym with the plat in thilké place  
 Ther he is hurt ; this is as muche to seyn,  
 Ye mooté with the platté swerd ageyn

144. *to*, E<sup>3</sup> *unto*.146. *the* (2), H<sup>4</sup> *this*.150. *stevēne*, speech.154. *do boote*, help.158. *kerve*, E *hym kerve*.160. *that is wounded*, H *is i-  
wounded*.*the*, E *a*.162. *plat*, flat.*thilke*, E<sup>2</sup> *that*.

Strike hym in the wounde and it wol close. 165  
 This is a verray sooth withouten glose,  
 It failleth nat whils it is in youre hoold."

And whan this knyght hath thus his talé toold,  
 He rideth out of halle, and doun he lighte.  
 His steedé, which that shoon as sonnè brighte, 170  
 Stant in the court as stille as any stoon.  
 This knyght is to his chambré lad anoon  
 And is unarmed and unto mete y-set.

The presentes been ful roially y-fet,—  
 This is to seyn, the swerd and the mirour,— 175  
 And born anon into the heighé tour,  
 With certeine officers ordeyned therfore ;  
 And unto Canacee this ryng was bore  
 Solempnely, ther she sit at the table ;  
 But sikerly, withouten any fable, 180  
 The hors of bras, that may nat be remewed,  
 It stant as it were to the ground y-glewed ;  
 Ther may no man out of the place it dryve  
 For noon engyn of wyndas ne polyve ;  
 And causé why? for they kan nat the craft ; 185  
 And therfore in the place they han it laft,  
 Til that the knyght hath taught hem the manere  
 To voyden hym, as ye shal after heere.

Greet was the prees that swarmeth to and fro  
 To gauren on this hors that stondeth so ; 190  
 For it so heigh was, and so brood and long,

169. *halle*, H<sup>4</sup> *the halle*.

173. *unto*, H<sup>6</sup> *to*.

174. *y-fet*, fetched.

181. *remewed*, removed.

184. *wyndas ne polyve*, windlass  
 nor pulley.

190. *gauren*, gaze.

So wel proporcionéd for to been strong,  
 Right as it were a steede of Lumbardye ;  
 Ther-with so horsly, and so quyk of eye,  
 As it a gentil Poilleys courser were ; 195  
 For certès, fro his tayl unto his ere,  
 Nature ne art ne koude hym nat amende  
 In no degree, as al the peple wende.  
 But everemoore hir moosté wonder was  
 How that it koudé go, and was of bras ! 200  
 It was of fairye, as al the peple semed.  
 Diversé folk diversély they demed ;  
 As many heddes as manye wittes ther been.  
 They murmureden as dooth a swarm of been,  
 And maden skiles after hir fantasies, 205  
 Rehersynge of thise oldé poetries ;  
 And seyde that it was lyk the Pegasee,  
 The hors that haddé wyngés for to flee ;  
 Or elles it was the Grekés hors, Synoun,  
 That broghté Troiè to destruccioun, 210  
 As men may in thise oldé geestés rede.

"Myn herte," quod oon, "is everemoore in  
 drede ;

I trowe som men of armés been ther-inne,  
 That shapen hem this citee for to wyne ;  
 It were right good that al swich thyng were knowe."

Another rownéd to his felawe lowe, 216  
 And seyde, "He lyeth ! it is rather lyk

195. *Poilleys*, Apulian.

205. *skiles*, reasons.

211. *geestes*, stories.

215. *right*, om. H.

216. *rowned*, whispered.

217. *it*, H<sup>b</sup> for *it*.

An apparence, y-maad by som magyk ;  
 As jogelours pleyen at thise feestés grete."  
 Of sondry doutés thus they jangle and trete, 220  
 As lewéd peple demeth comunly  
 Of thyngés that been maad moore subtilly  
 Than they kan in hir lewednesse comprehende,  
 They demen gladly to the badder ende.

And somme of hem wondred on the mirour 225  
 That born was up into the hyè tour,  
 Hou men myghte in it swiché thyngés se.

Another answerde and seyde it myghte wel be  
 Naturelly by composiciouns  
 Of anglis, and of slye reflexiouns ; 230  
 And seyden that in Romé was swich oon.  
 They speken of Alocen and Vitulon,  
 And Aristotle, that writen in hir lyves  
 Of queynté mirours, and of prospectives,  
 As known they that han hir bookés herd. 235

And oother folk han wondred on the swerd  
 That woldé percen thurghout every thyng ;  
 And fille in speche of Thelophus the kyng,  
 And of Achilles with his queynté spere,  
 For he koude with it bothé heele and dere, 240  
 Right in swich wise as men may with the swerd

226. *hye*, H<sup>5</sup> *maistre*.

231. *in Rome*, an allusion to the wizardries attributed to Virgil.

232. *Alocen and Vitulon*, Alhazen was an Arab astronomer of the 11th

century, and Vitellio a Polish, of the 13th.

233. *And*, H<sup>5</sup> *Of, and of*.

238. *Thelophus*, Telephus of Mysia, wounded and healed by the spear of Achilles.

240. *dere*, harm.

Of which right now ye han youre-selven herd.  
 They speken of sondry hardyng of metal,  
 And speke of medicynés therwithal,  
 And how and whanne it sholde y-harded be, 245  
 Which is unknowe, alगतés unto me.

Tho speeké they of Canacées ryng,  
 And seyden alle that swich a wonder thyng  
 Of craft of ryngés herde they nevere noon ;  
 Save that he Moyses and kyng Salomon 250  
 Hadden a name of konnyng in swich art ;  
 Thus seyn the peple and drawn hem apart.

But nathélees somme seiden that it was  
 Wonder to maken of fern-asshen glas,  
 And yet nys glas nat lyk asshen of fern, 255  
 But for they han i-knownen it so fern  
 Therfore cesseth hir janglyng and hir wonder.

As sooré wondren somme on cause of thonder,  
 On ebbe, on flood, on gossomer, and on myst,  
 And on alle thyng til that the cause is wyst. 260  
 Thus jangle they, and demen and devyse,  
 Til that the kyng gan fro the bord aryse.

Phebus hath laft the angle meridional,  
 And yet ascendyng was the beest roial,  
 The gentil Leon, with his Aldrian, 265  
 Whan that this Tartré kyng Cambyuskan

246. *algates*, at all events.

256. *i-knownen*, E<sup>6</sup> *knownen*.  
*so fern*, so long.

262. *the* (2), H<sup>5</sup> *his*.

263. *angle meridional*, the

southern angle answered  
 to the time from 10 A.M.  
 to noon.

265. *Aldrian*, or Aldiran, the  
 star marking the Lion's  
 fore-paws.



Roos fro his bord, ther as he sat ful hye.  
 Toform hym gooth the loudè mynstralcye  
 Til he cam to his chambre of parementz ;  
 Ther as they sownen diverse instrumentz 270  
 That it is lyk an hevene for to heere.  
 Now dauncen lusty Venus children deere,  
 For in the Fyssh hir lady sat ful hye,  
 And looketh on hem with a freendly eye.

This noble kyng is set up in his trone ; 275  
 This strangè knyght is fet to hym ful soone,  
 And on the daunce he gooth with Canacee.  
 Heere is the revel and the jolitee  
 That is nat able a dul man to devyse ;  
 He moste han knowen love and his servyse, 280  
 And been a feestlych man, as fressh as May,  
 That sholdè yow devysen swich array.

Who koudè tellè yow the forme of daunces  
 So unkouthe, and so fresshè contenaunces,  
 Swich subtil lookyng and dissymulynges 285  
 For drede of jalouse mennes aperceyvynge?  
 No man but Launcelet, and he is deed.  
 Therfore I passe of al this lustiheed ;  
 I sey namoore, but in this jolynesse  
 I lete hem til men to the soper dresse. 290

The styward byt the spices for to hye,  
 And eek the wyn, in al this melodye.

267. *as*, E<sup>2</sup> *that*.269. *parements*, adornments,  
state.271. *it is lyk*, H<sup>5</sup> *is y-like, is  
lik*.273. *the Fyssh*, Venus is "ex-  
alted" in *Piscis*.284. *unkouthe*, strange.291. *byt*, biddeth.  
*hye*, hasten.

The usshers and the squiers been y-noon,  
 The spices and the wyn is come anoon.  
 They ete and drynke, and whan this hadde an ende,  
 Unto the temple, as reson was, they wende. 296

The service doon they soupen al by day;  
 What nedeth yow rehercen hire array?  
 Éch man woot wel that a kynges feeste  
 Hath plentee to the mooste and to the leeste, 300  
 And deyntees mo than been in my knowyng.

At after soper gooth this noble kyng  
 To seen this hors of bras, with al the route  
 Of lordés and of ladyes hym aboute.  
 Swich wondryng was ther on this hors of bras 305  
 That syn the greté sege of Troiè was,—  
 Ther as men wondreden on an hors also,—  
 Ne was ther swich a wondryng as was tho.  
 But fynally, the kyng axeth this knyght  
 The vertu of this courser, and the myght, 310  
 And preydè hym to telle his governaunce.

This hors anoon bigan to trippe and daunce  
 Whan that this knyght leyde hand upon his reyne,  
 And seyde, "Sire, ther is namoore to seyne,  
 But whan yow list to ryden anywhere 315  
 Ye mooten trille a pyn, stant in his ere,  
 Which I shal tellè yow bitwix us two.  
 Ye mootè nempne hym to what place also,  
 Or to what contree, that yow list to ryde ;

298. *yow*, E<sup>3</sup> *me*.

307. *wondreden*, H *wondred*,  
 Corp.<sup>2</sup> *wondren*.

316. *trille*, turn.

318. *nempne*, name, tell.

And whan ye come ther as yow list abyde, 320  
 Bidde hym descende, and trille another pyn,—  
 For therin lith theffect of al the gyn,—  
 And he wol doun descende and doon youre wille,  
 And in that placé he wol stondé stille.  
 Though al the world the contrarie hadde y-swore,  
 He shal nat thennés been y-drawe ne y-bore ; 326  
 Or, if yow listé bidde hym thennés goon,  
 Trillé this pyn, and he wol varysshe anoon  
 Out of the sighte of every maner wight,  
 And come agayn, be it by day or nyght, 330  
 Whan that yow list to clepen hym ageyn  
 In swich a gyse as I shal to yow seyn,  
 Bitwixé yow and me, and that ful soone.  
 Ride whan yow list, ther is namoore to doone.”

Enforméd whan the kyng was of that knyght,  
 And hath conceyvé in his wit aright 336  
 The manere and the forme of al this thyng,  
 Ful glad and blithe this noble doughty kyng  
 Repeireth to his revel as biforn.

The brydel is unto the tour y-born 340  
 And kept among hise jueles leeve and deere,  
 The hors varysshed, I noot in what manere,  
 Out of hir sighte,—ye gete namoore of me ;  
 But thus I lete in lust and jolitee  
 This Cambyuskan hise lordés festeiynge, 345  
 Tíl wel ny the day bigan to sprynge.

324. *stonde*, H<sup>5</sup> *abyde*.326. *ne*, E<sup>2</sup> *nor*.330. *by*, om. E<sup>6</sup>.338. *Ful*, E<sup>2</sup> *Thus*.*doughty*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

## [PART II]

The norice of digestioun, the sleepe,  
 Gan on hem wynke, and bad hem taken keepe  
 That muchel drynke and labour wolde han reste ;  
 And with a galpyng mouth hem alle he keste, 350  
 And seyde, it was tyme to lye adoun,  
 For blood was in his domynacioun.  
 "Cherisseth blood, natúres freend," quod he.  
 They thanken hym galpynge, by two, by thre,  
 And every wight gan drawe hym to his reste, 355  
 As sleepe hem bad ; they tooke it for the beste.

Hire dremés shul nat been y-toold for me ;  
 Ful were hire heddés of fumositee,  
 That causeth dreem, of which ther nys no charge.  
 They slepen til that it was prymé large, 360  
 The moosté part, but it were Canacee.  
 She was ful mesurable as wommen be,  
 For of hir fader hadde she také leve  
 To goon to reste, soone after it was eve.  
 Hir listé nat appalléd for to be, 365  
 Ne on the morwe unfeestlich for to se,  
 And slepte hire firsté sleepe and thanne awook ;  
 For swich a joye she in hir herté took,

349. *drynke*, H *merthe*, Corp.<sup>3</sup>  
*mete*.

350. *galpyng*, gaping.

351. *it*, H<sup>5</sup> *that it*.

352. *blood*, etc., the blood was  
 supposed to be "in  
 domination" from 9  
 P.M. to 3 A.M.

357. *been y-toold*, H<sup>5</sup> *now be  
 told* ; rest *be told*.

358. *fumositee*, heavy vapours.

360. *pryme large*, full prime,  
*i.e.* 9 A.M.

362. *mesurable*, moderate.

363. *leve*, H<sup>4</sup> *hir leve*.

365. *appalled*, made pale.

Bothe of hir queynté ryng and hire mirour,  
 That twenty tyme she changèd hir colour, 370  
 And in hire sleepe, right for impressioun  
 Of hire mirour, she hadde a visioun.  
 Wherefore er that the sonnè gan up glyde  
 She clepèd on hir maistresse hire bisyde,  
 And seyde that hire listè for to ryse. 375

Thise oldè wommen that been gladly wyse,  
 As is hire maistresse, answerde hire anon,  
 And seyde, "Madame, whider wil ye goon  
 Thus erly, for the folk been alle on reste?"

"I wol," quod she, "arise,—for me leste 380  
 No lenger for to slepe,—and walke aboute."

Hire maistresse clepeth wommen a greet route,  
 And up they rysen wel a ten or twelve;  
 Up riseth fresshé Canacee hir-selve,  
 As rody and bright as dooth the yongè sonne 385  
 That in the Ram is foure degrees up ronne.  
 Noon hyer was he whan she redy was,  
 And forth she walketh esily a pas,  
 Arrayed after the lusty sesoun soote,  
 Lightly for to pleye, and walke on foote, 390  
 Nat but with fyve or sixe of hir meynée,  
 And in a trench forth in the park gooth she.

The vapour which that fro the erthè glood

374. *cleped*, called.

377. *is*, om. E.

383. *a*, E<sup>2</sup> *an*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> om.

386. *foure* (H<sup>4</sup> *ten*), cp. l. 51  
 and note. At its rising

on the 16th March the  
 sun would be passing  
 from the 4th degree to  
 the 5th.

389. *soote*, sweet.

393. *glood*, glided.

Madè the sonne to semé rody and brood,  
 But nathélees it was so fair a sighte 395  
 That it made alle hire hertés for to lighte,—  
 What for the sesoun, and the morwénynge,  
 And for the foweles that she herdé synge ;  
 For right anon she wisté what they mente  
 Right by hir song, and knew al hire entente. 400

The knotté why that every tale is toold,  
 If it be taried til that lust be coold  
 Of hem that han it after herkned yoore,  
 The savour passeth ever lenger the moore,  
 For fulsomnesse of his prolixitee ; 405  
 And by the samé resoun thynketh me,  
 I sholdé to the knotte condescende  
 And maken of hir walkyng soone an ende.

Amydde a tree fordrye, as whit as chalk,  
 As Canacee was pleyying in hir walk, 410  
 Ther sat a faucon over hire heed ful hye,  
 That with a pitous voys so gan to crye  
 That all the wode resounéd of hire cry.  
 Y-beten hath she hir-self so pitously  
 With bothe hir wyngés til the redé blood 415  
 Ran endélong the tree ther as she stood,  
 And evere in oon she cryde alwey and shrighthe,  
 And with hir beek hir-selven so she prighthe,  
 That ther nys tygre, ne noon so crueel beest,

402. *lust*, pleasure.409. *fordrye*, E<sup>2</sup> *fordryed*, dried up.416. *as*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.417. *shrighthe*, shrieked.418. *prighthe*, pricked.

That dwelleth outhur in wode or in forest, 420  
 That nolde han wept, if that he wepé koude,  
 For sorwe of hire, she shrighthe alwey so loude ;  
 For ther nas nevere yet no man on lyve,—  
 If that I koude a faucon wel discryve,—  
 That herde of swich another of fairnesse, 425  
 As wel of plumage as of gentillesse  
 Of shape, and al that myghte y-rekened be.  
 A faucon peregryn thanne seméd she  
 Of fremdé land, and everemoore as she stood,  
 She swowneth now and now for lakke of blood,  
 Til wel neigh is she fallen fro the tree. 431  
 This fairé kyngés doghter, Canacee,  
 That on hir fynger baar the queynté ryng,  
 Thurgh which she understood wel every thyng  
 That any fowel may in his leden seyn, 435  
 And koude answeren hym in his ledene ageyn,  
 Hath understandé what this faucon seyde,  
 And wel neigh for the routhe almoost she deyde ;  
 And to the tree she gooth ful hastily,  
 And on this faukon looketh pitously, 440  
 And heeld hir lappe abrood, for wel she wiste  
 The faukon mosté fallen fro the twiste,  
 Whan that it swowned next, for lakke of blood.  
 A longé while to wayten hire she stood,

420. *outhur*, either.421. *he*, E<sup>2</sup> *she*.
 428. *peregryn*, the pilgrim  
 falcon, so called because  
 it keeps away from its  
 nest.
429. *fremde*, foreign.*everemoore*, H *ever*.435. *leden*, language.436. *answeren*, H<sup>6</sup> *answer*.442. *twiste*, branch.

Til atté laste she spak in this manere 445  
 Unto the hauk, as ye shal after heere :  
 "What is the cause, if it be for to telle,  
 That ye be in this furial pyne of helle?"  
 Quod Canacee unto the hauk above.  
 "Is this for sorwe of deeth, or los of love?" 450  
 For, as I trowé, thise been causes two  
 That causen moost a gentil herté wo.  
 Of oother harm it nedeth nat to speke,  
 For ye youre-self upon your-self yow wreke,  
 Which proveth wel that outhur love or drede 455  
 Moot been enchesoun of youre cruel dede,  
 Syn that I see noon oother wight yow chace.  
 For love of God, as dooth youre-selven grace,  
 Or what may been youre helpe; for West nor Est  
 Ne saugh I nevere, er now, no bryd ne beest 460  
 That ferdé with hymself so pitously.  
 Ye sle me with youre sorwé verrailly;  
 I have of yow so greet compassioun.  
 For Goddès love com fro the tree adoun,  
 And as I am a kyngés doghter trewe, 465  
 If that I verrailly the causé knewe  
 Of youre disese, if it lay in my myght,  
 I wolde amenden it er it were nyght,  
 As wisly helpe me greté God of kynde!  
 And herbès shal I right ynowe y-fynde 470  
 To heelè with youre hurtès hastily."

448. *furial pyne*, raging pain.455. *love*, H<sup>b</sup> *ire*.456. *enchesoun*, occasion.461. *ferde*, fared.463. *compassioun*, E *passioun*.468. *it* (2), so Camb. MS.;  
E<sup>b</sup> *that it*.469. *kynde*, nature.



Tho shrighthe this faucon yet moore pitously  
 Than ever she dide, and fil to grounde anon,  
 And lith aswowné, deed, and lyk a stoon,  
 Til Canacee hath in hire lappe hire take 475  
 Unto the tyme she gan of swough awake ;  
 And after that she of hir swough gan breyde  
 Right in hir haukes ledene thus she seyde :  
 "That pitee renneth soone in gentil herte,  
 Feelynge his similitude in peynés smerte, 480  
 Is prevéd al day, as men may it see,  
 As wel by werk as by auctoritee ;  
 For gentil herté kitheth gentillesse.  
 I se wel that ye han of my distresse  
 Compassioun, my fairé Canacee, 485  
 Of verray wommanly benignytee  
 That nature in youre principles hath set ;  
 But for noon hopé for to fare the bet,  
 But for to obeye unto youre herté free,  
 And for to maken othere be war by me, 490  
 As by the whelpe chasted is the leoun ;  
 Right for that cause and that conclusioun,  
 Whil that I have a leyser and a space,  
 Myn harm I wol confessen er I pace."  
 And evere whil that oon hir sorwe tolde 495  
 That oother weepe as she to water wolde,  
 Til that the faucon bad hire to be stille,  
 And with a syk right thus she seyde hir wille.

477. *breyde*, awake; H<sup>6</sup> *abreyde*  
*upbreide*, omitting *hir* or  
*gan*.

478. *ledene*, speech.

483. *kitheth*, shows; H<sup>4</sup> *kepeth*.

487. *set*, E<sup>2</sup> *y-set*.

489. *to*, om. E.

491. *chasted*, H<sup>8</sup> *chastised*.

"Ther I was bred, allas ! that hardè day,—  
 And fostred in a roche of marbul gray 500  
 So tendrèly that no thyng eylèd me ;—  
 I nystè nat what was adversitee  
 Til I koude flee ful hye under the sky—  
 Tho dwelte a tercèlet me fastè by,  
 That semèd welle of allè gentillesse ; 505  
 Al were he ful of tresoun and falsnesse,  
 It was so wrapped under humble cheere,  
 And under hewe of trouthe in swich manere,  
 Under plesance, and under bisy peyne,  
 That I ne koude han wend he koudè feyne, 510  
 So depe in greyn he dyèd his coloures.  
 Right as a serpent hit hym under floures  
 Til he may seen his tymè for to byte,  
 Right so this god of love, this ypocryte,  
 Dooth so hise cerymonyes and obeisaunces, 515  
 And kepeth in semblant alle hise observaunces  
 That sowneth into gentillesse of love.  
 As in a tounge is al the faire above,  
 And under is the corps, swich as ye woot,  
 Swich was the ypocrite, bothe coold and hoot, 520  
 And in this wise he servèd his entente,  
 That save the feend, noon wistè what he mente  
 Til he so longe hadde wopen and compleyned,  
 And many a yeer his service to me feyned,

499. *Ther, E<sup>2</sup> That.*504. *tercelet*, a male hawk.512. *hit*, hideth.515. *obeisaunces*, *H observaunce*,
 reading in next line,  
*Under subtil colour and  
 aqueyntaunce.*
517. *sowneth into*, tend towards.

Til that myn herte, to pitous and to nyce, 525  
 Al innocent of his corouned malice,  
 For-fered of his deeth, as thoughté me,  
 Upon his othés and his seurétee,  
 Graunted hym love upon this condicioun,  
 That everemoore myn honour and renoun 530  
 Were savéd, bothé privee and apert ;  
 This is to seyn, that after his desert,  
 I gaf hym al myn herté and my thoght,—  
 God woot, and he, that otherwisé noght,—  
 And took his herte in chaunge for myn for ay ; 535  
 But sooth is seyð, goon sithen many a day,  
 ‘ A trewe wight and a thief thenken nat oon ; ’  
 And whan he saugh the thyng so fer y-goon  
 That I hadde graunted hym fully my love,  
 In swich a gyse as I have seyð above, 540  
 And geven hym my trewé herte as fre  
 As he swoor that he gaf his herte to me ;  
 Anon this tigre ful of doublenesse  
 Fil on hise knees with so devout humblesse,  
 With so heigh reverence, and, as by his cheere, 545  
 So lyk a gentil love of manere,  
 So ravysshed, as it seméd, for the joye,  
 That nevere Jason, ne Parys of Troye,—  
 Jason ? Cértés, ne noon oother man  
 Syn Lameth was, that alderfirst bigan 550  
 To loven two, as writen folk biforn ;

525. *nyce*, foolish.548. *Jason*, E<sup>3</sup> *Troilus*, an impossible reading.526. *corouned*, crowned, *i.e.* consummate.550. *Lameth*, Genesis iv. 19. *alderfirst*, first of all.

Ne nevere, syn the firsté man was born,  
 Ne koudé man, by twenty thousand part,  
 Cóuntrefete the sophymes of his art,  
 Ne weré worthy unbokelen his galoche 555  
 Ther doublenesse or feynyng sholde approche,  
 Ne so koude thanke a wight as he dide me !  
 His manere was an hevene for to see  
 Til any womman, were she never so wys,  
 So peynted he, and kembde at point-devys, 560  
 As wel hise wordés as his contenaunce ;  
 And I so loved hym for his obeisaunce,  
 And for the trouthe I deméd in his herte,  
 That if so were that any thyng hym smerte,  
 Al were it never so lite, and I it wiste, 565  
 Me thoughte I felté deeth myn herté twiste ;  
 And shortly, so ferforth this thyng is went,  
 That my wyl was his willés instrument,—  
 This is to seyn, my wyl obeyed his wyl  
 In allé thyng, as fer as resoun fil, 570  
 Kepyng the boundés of my worshiþe evere ;  
 Ne nevere hadde I thyng so lief ne levere  
 As hym, God woot ! ne nevere shal namo.  
 This lasteth lenger than a yeer or two  
 That I supposed of hym noght but good ; 575  
 But finally thus atté laste it stood  
 That Fortune woldé that he mosté twynne  
 Out of that placé which that I was inne.

555. *galoche*, a sort of patten.562. *so*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.559. *Til*, H<sup>3</sup> *To*.565. *lite*, H<sup>3</sup> *litel*.560. *kembde at point-devys*,  
arranged to a nicety.577. *twynne*, depart.

Wher me was wo, that is no questioun ;  
 I kan nat make of it discripsioun, 580  
 For o thyng dare I tellen boldely,  
 I knowe what is the peyne of deeth ther-by ;  
 Swich harme I felte for I ne myghte bileve !  
 So on a day of me he took his leve,  
 So sorwefully eek that I wende verrailly 585  
 That he had felt as muché harm as I,  
 Whan that I herde hym speke and saugh his  
     hewe ;  
 But nathélees I thoughte he was so trewe,  
 And eek that he repairé sholde ageyn  
 Withinne a litel while, sooth to seyn, 590  
 And resoun wolde eek that he mosté go  
 For his honour, as ofte it happeth so,  
 That I made vertu of necessitee,  
 And took it wel, syn that it mosté be.  
 As I best myghte I hidde fro hym my sorwe 595  
 And took hym by the hond, Seint John to borwe,  
 And seyde hym thus : ' Lo, I am yourés al ;  
 Beth swich as I to yow have been and shal.'  
 What he answerde it nedeth noght reherce ;  
 Who kan sey bet than he, who kan do werse ? 600  
 Whan he hath al i-seyd, thanne hath he doon.  
 ' Therefore bihoveth hire a ful long spoon  
 That shal ete with a feend,' thus herde I seye ;  
 So atté laste he mosté forth his weye,

585. *sorwefully*, H *soriful*.596. *to borwe*, as my surety.597. *hym*, om. H<sup>b</sup>.601. *i-seyd*, so Camb. MS.; E*seyd*, H<sup>b</sup> *wel sayd*.602. *hire*, H<sup>a</sup> *him*.

And forth he fleeth til he cam ther hym leste. 605  
 Whan it cam hym to purpos for to reste,  
 I trowe he haddé thilké text in mynde,  
 That 'Allé thyng repeiryng to his kynde  
 Gladeth hymself,'—thus seyn men, as I gesse.  
 Men loven of propré kynde newefangelnesse, 610  
 As briddés doon that men in cages fede;  
 For though thou nyght and day take of hem  
 hede,

And strawe hir cagè faire, and softe as silk,  
 And geve hem sugre, hony, breed and milk,  
 Yet right anon as that his dore is uppe, 615  
 He with his feet wol spurne adoun his cuppe,  
 And to the wode he wole, and wormés ete;  
 So newefangel been they of hire mete  
 And loven novelrie of propré kynde;  
 No gentillesse of blood ne may hem bynde. 620

"So ferde this tercèlet, allas, the day!  
 Though he were gentil born, fressh and gay,  
 And goodlich for to seen, humble and free.  
 He saugh upon a tyme a kyté flee,  
 And sodeynly he loved this kyté so 625  
 That al his love is clene fro me ago,  
 And hath his trouthe falséd in this wyse.  
 Thus hath the kyte my love in hire servyse,  
 And I am lorn withouten remedie."

610. *of propre kynde*, naturally.

617. *And to the wode*, at this point there is a gap in H of eight leaves, containing lines 617-1223.

619. *novelrie*, novelty.

622. *fressh*, Heng. and *fressh*.

623. *humble*, Heng.<sup>4</sup> and *humble*.

And with that word this faucon gan to crie, 630  
And swowned eft in Canacees barm.

Greet was the sorwe for the haukés harm  
That Canacee and alle hir wommen made ;  
They nysté hou they myghte the faucon glade,  
But Canacee hom bereth hire in hir lappe, 635  
And softely in plastres gan hire wrappe,  
Ther as she with hire beek hadde hurt herselfe.  
Now kan nat Canacee but herbés delve  
Out of the ground and maké salvés newe  
Of herbés precieuse, and fyne of hewe, 640  
To heelen with this hauk ; fro day to nyght  
She dooth hire bisynesse and hire fulle myght,  
And by hire beddés heed she made a mewe,  
And covered it with veluettés blewe,  
In signe of trouthe that is in wommen sene, 645  
And al withoute the mewe is peynted grene,  
In which were peynted alle thise falsé fowles,  
As beth thise tidyves, tercélettes and owles ;  
And pyés, on hem for to crie and chyde,  
Right for despit, were peynted hem bisyde. 650

Thus lete I Canacee, hir hauk kepyng,  
I wol namoore as now speke of hir rying  
Til it come eft to purpos for to seyn  
How that this faucon gat hire love ageyn,  
Repentant, as the storie telleth us, 655

631. *barm*, bosom.

639. *salves*, E<sup>2</sup> *saves*.

643. *mewe*, cage.

647. *were peynted*, E *ther were y-peynted*.

648. *tidyves*, some kind of small bird.

649, 650. These two lines are reversed in the six MSS.; Camb.<sup>4</sup> omitting *And*.

By mediacioun of Cambalus,  
 The kyngés sone, of whiché I yow tolde ;  
 But hennés-forth I wol my proces holde  
 To speken of áventures and of batailles,  
 That nevere yet was herd so greet mervailles. 660

First wol I tellé yow of Cambyuskan,  
 That in his tymé many a citee wan ;  
 And after wol I speke of Algarsif,  
 How that he wan Theodera to his wif,  
 For whom ful ofte in greet peril he was, 665  
 Ne hadde he ben holpé by the steede of bras ;  
 And after wol I speke of Cambalo,  
 That faught in lystés with the bretheren two  
 For Canacee, er that he myghte hire wynne ;  
 And ther I lefte I wol ageyn bigynne. 670

## [PART III]

Appollo whirleth up his chaar so hye  
 Til that the god Mercurius hous, the slye—

*Heere folwen the wordes of the Frankelyn to the Squier,  
 and the wordes of the Hoost to the Frankelyn*

“ In feith, Squier, thow hast thee wel y-quit  
 And gentilly, I preisé wel thy wit,”  
 Quod the Frankeleyn, “ considerynge thy yowthe  
 So feelyngly thou spekest, sire, I allowe the, 676

657. *whiché*, E<sup>4</sup> *which*.672. The “half-told” tale breaks  
off here.659. *speken*, Heng.<sup>2</sup> *speke*.676. *allowe*, approve.



As to my doom ther is noon that is heere  
Of eloquencé that shal be thy peere,  
If that thou lyve ! God gevè thee good chaunce,  
And in vertu sende thee continuaunce ; 680  
For of thy speche I havé greet deyntee.

I have a sone, and, by the Trinitee !  
I haddé levere than twenty pound worth lond,  
Though it right now were fallen in myn hond,  
He were a man of swich discrecioun 685  
As that ye been ; fy on possessioun,  
But if a man be vertuous withal !

I have my soné snybbéd and yet shal,  
For he to vertu listeth nat entende,  
But for to pleye at dees, and to despende 690  
And lese al that he hath, is his usage ;  
And he hath levere talken with a page,  
Than to comune with any gentil wight  
There he myghte lerné gentillesse aright." 694

"Straw for youre 'gentillessé,' quod our Hoost.  
"What ! Frankéleyn, *pardee*, sire, wel thou woost  
That ech of yow moot tellen atté leste  
A tale or two, or breken his biheste."

"That knowe I wel, sire," quod the Frankéleyn,  
"I prey yow haveth me nat in desdeyn 700  
Though to this man I speke a word or two."

"Telle on thy tale, withouten wordés mo !"

"Gladly, sire Hoost," quod he, "I wole obeye  
Unto your wyl ; now herkneth what I seye.  
I wol yow nat contrarien in no wyse 705

677. *doom*, judgment.

As fer as that my wittès wol suffyse ;  
 I prey to God that it may plesen yow,  
 Thanne woot I wel that it is good ynow."

*The Prologe of the Frankeleyns Tale*

Thise olde, gentil Britons, in hir dayes,  
 Of diverse áventurès maden layes, 710  
 Rymeyèd in hir firstè Briton tonge,  
 Whiche layès with hir instrumentz they songe,  
 Or ellès reddèn hem for hir plesaunce,  
 And oon of hem have I in rémembraunce,  
 Which I shal seyn with good wyl as I kan. 715

But, sires, by-cause I am a burel man,  
 At my bigynnyng first I yow biseche,  
 Have me excusèd of my rudè speche.  
 I lernèd nevere rethoric certeyn ;  
 Thyng that I speke it moot be bare and pleyn. 720  
 I sleepe nevere on the Mount of Pernaso,  
 Ne lernèd Marcus Tullius Scithero.  
 Colours ne knowe I none, withouten drede,  
 But swichè colours as growen in the mede,  
 Or ellès swichè as men dye or peynte. 725

711. *Rymeyed* (rimed), Corp.<sup>4</sup>  
*Rymeden, remedyn.*

714. *oon of hem*, etc., this distinct  
 statement (cp. l. 813)  
 leaves no doubt that this  
 tale follows, probably  
 with some closeness, a  
 French or Breton story,  
 unluckily now lost.

716. *burel*, unlettered.

721. To disprove his own claim  
 of burelness he quotes  
 Persius (Prol. l. 2), as  
 noted in E<sup>2</sup>.

722. *Ne*, Camb.<sup>4</sup> *Ne nevere, ne*  
*I never.*

723. *Colours*, ornaments of  
 style.

Colours of rethoryk been me to queynte ;  
 My spirit feeleth noght of swich mateere,  
 But if yow list my talé shul ye heere.

## FRANKLIN'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Frankeleyns Tale*

In Armorik, that callèd is Britayne,  
 Ther was a knyght that loved and dide his payne  
 To serve a lady in his bestè wise ; 731  
 And many a labour, many a greet emprise,  
 He for his lady wroghte, er she were wonne ;  
 For she was oon the faireste under sonne,  
 And eek therto come of so heigh kynrede, 735  
 That wel unnethés dorste this knyght for drede  
 Telle hire his wo, his peyne, and his distresse ;  
 But attè laste she for his worthynesse,  
 And namely for his meke obeÿsaunce,  
 Hath swich a pitee caught of his penaunce, 740  
 That pryvèly she fil of his accord,  
 To take hym for hir housbonde and hir lord,  
 Of swich lordshipe as men han over hir wyves,  
 And for to lede the moore in blisse hir lyves,  
 Of his free wyl he swoor hire as a knyght, 745  
 That nevere in al his lyf he, day ne nyght,  
 Ne sholde upon hym také no maistrie

726. *been me*, E *ben* ; Heng.  
*they ben*, are too quaint  
 for me.

736. *unnethes*, hardly.

739. *namely*, especially.

746. *in al his lyf*, etc., Corp.<sup>8</sup>  
*in his wille by day ne  
 nyght Ne schulde he.*

Agayn hir wyl, ne kithe hire jalousie ;  
But hire obeye and folwe hir wyl in al,  
As any love to his lady shal, 750  
Save that the name of soveraynètee,  
That wolde he have, for shame of his degree.

She thankèd hym and with ful greet humblesse,  
She seyde, "Sire, sith of youre gentillesse  
Ye profre me to have so large a reyne, 755  
Ne woldè nevere God bitwixe us tweyne,  
As in my gilt, were outhur werre or stryf.  
Sire, I wol be youre humble, trewè wyf ;  
Have heer my trouthe, til that myn hertè breste ;"  
Thus been they bothe in quiete and in reste. 760

For o thyng, sirès, sauflý dar I seye,  
That freendès everych outhur moot obeye,  
If they wol longè holden compaignye.  
Love wol nat been constreynèd by maistrye.  
Whan maistrie comth, the god of love, anon, 765  
Beteth hise wynges and, farewell, he is gon !  
Love is a thyng as any spirit free.  
Wommen of kynde desiren libertee,  
And nat to been constreynèd as a thral ;  
And so doon men, if I sooth seyen shal. 770  
Looke, who that is moost pacient in love,  
He is at his advantage al above.

Pácience is an heigh vertú, certeyn,  
For it venquysseth, as thise clerkès seyn,  
Thyngès that rigour sholdè nevere atteyne ; 775  
For every word men may nat chide or pleyne.

748. *kithe*, show.768. *of kynde*, naturally.

Lerneth to suffre, or elles so moot I goon,  
 Ye shul it lerne, wher so ye wole or noon ;  
 For in this world, certein, ther no wight is  
 That he ne dooth or seith som tyme amys. 780  
 Iré, siknesse, or constellacioun,  
 Wyn, wo, or chaungynge of complexioun,  
 Causeth ful ofte to doon amys or speken.  
 On every wrong a man may nat be wreken ;  
 After the tymé moste be temperaunce 785  
 To every wight that kan on governaunce ;  
 And therfore hath this wisé, worthy knyght,—  
 To lyve in esé,—suffrance hire bihight,  
 And she to hym ful wisly gan to swere  
 That nevere sholde ther be defaut in here. 790

Heere may men seen an humble, wys accord ;  
 Thus hath she take hir servant and hir lord,—  
 Servant in love, and lord in mariage,—  
 Thanne was he bothe in lordshipe and servage.  
 Servagè? nay, but in lordshipe above ; 795  
 Sith he hath both his lady and his love ;  
 His lady, certés, and his wyf also,  
 The which that lawe of love acordeth to ;  
 And whan he was in this prosperitee  
 Hoom with his wyf he gooth to his contree, 800  
 Nat fer fro Pedmark, ther his dwellyng was,  
 Wher as he lyveth in blisse and in solas.

Who koudé telle, but he hadde wedded be,

786. *kan on*, has skill in ; Corp.<sup>3</sup>  
*can no*.

788. *bihight*, promised.

801. *Pedmark*, Penmark, on  
 the west coast of Brit-  
 tany.

The joye, the ese, and the prosperitee  
That is bitwixe an housbonde and his wyf? 805

A yeer and moore lasted this blisful lyf,  
Til that the knyght of which I speke of thus,  
That of Kayrrud was cleped Arveragus,  
Shoope him to goon and dwelle a yeer or tweyne  
In Engélonde, that cleped was eek Briteyne, 810  
To seke in armés worshipe and honour,  
For al his lust he sette in swich labour;  
And dwelléd there two yeer,—the book seith thus.

Now wol I stynten of this Arveragus,  
And speken I wole of Dorigene his wyf, 815  
That loveth hire housbonde as hire hertés lyf;  
For his absencé wepeth she and siketh,  
As doon thise noble wyvés, whan hem liketh;  
She moorneth, waketh, wayleth, fasteth, pleyneth;  
Desir of his presence hire so distreyneth, 820  
That al this wydé world she sette at noght.  
Hire freendés, whiche that knewe hir hevy thought,  
Conforten hire in al that ever they may.  
They prechen hire, they telle hire nyght and day,  
That causélees she sleeth herself, allas! 825  
And every confort possible in this cas  
They doon to hire with all hire bisynesse,  
Al for to make hire leve hire hevynesse.

By proces, as ye knowen everichoon,  
Men may so longé graven in a stoon 830

808. *Kayrrud*, the Red City; Corp.<sup>3</sup> *Kynrede*.  
810. *eek*, Camb. *er*.  
817. *siketh*, sighs.  
820. *distreyneth*, vexes.  
828. *leve*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *lete*.

Til som figúre therinne emprented be.  
 So longe han they confortid hire, til she  
 Recevyéd hath, by hope and by resoun,  
 The emprentyng of hire consolacioun,  
 Thurgh which hir greté sorwé gan aswage ; 835  
 She may nat alwey duren in swich rage.

And eek Arveragus in al this care  
 Hath sent hire lettres hoom of his welfare ;  
 And that he wol come hastily agayn ;  
 Or ellés hadde this sorwe hir herté slayn. 840

Hire freendés sawe hir sorwé gan to slake,  
 And preyède hir on knees, for Goddés sake,  
 To come and romen hire in compaignye,  
 Away to dryve hire derké fantasye ;  
 And finally she graunted that requeste, 845  
 For wel she saugh that it was for the beste.

Now stood hire castel fasté by the see,  
 And often with hire freendés walketh shee,  
 Hire to disporte upon the bank an heigh,  
 Where as she many a shipe and bargé seigh 850  
 Seillynge hir cours, where as hem listé go ;  
 But thanne was that a parcel of hire wo,  
 For to herself ful ofte "Allas !" seith she,  
 "Is ther no shipe, of so manye as I se,  
 Wol bryngen hom my lord? Thanne were myn  
 herte 855  
 Al warissshed of hise bittre peynés smerte."

842. *preyede*, E<sup>3</sup> *preyde*.853. *ofte* "Allas!" seith, Camb.<sup>4</sup>  
*ofte seyde*.843. *hire*, her.856. *warissshed*, cured.

Another tyme ther wolde she sitte and thynke,  
And caste hir eyen dounward fro the brynke ;  
But whan she saugh the grisly rokkés blake,  
For verray feere so wolde hir herté quake 860  
That on hire feet she myghte hire noght sustene ;  
Thanne wolde she sitte adoun upon the grene,  
And pitously into the see biholde,  
And seyn right thus, with sorweful sikés colde,

“Eterné God, that thurgh thy purveiaunce, 865  
Ledest the world by certain governaunce,  
In ydel, as men seyn, ye nothyng make ;  
But, Lord, thise grisly, feendly rokkés blake,  
That semen rather a foul confusioun  
Of werk than any fair creacioun 870  
Of swich a parfit wys God, and a stable,—  
Why han ye wrought this werk unresonable ?  
For by this werk south, north, ne west, ne est,  
Ther nys y-fostred man, ne bryd, ne beest ;  
It dooth no good, to my wit, but anoyeth ; 875  
Se ye nat, Lord, how mankynde it destroyeth ?  
An hundred thousand bodyes of mankynde  
Han rokkés slayn, al be they nat in mynde,  
Which mankynde is so fair part of thy werk,  
That thou it madest lyk to thyn owene merk. 880

“Thanne seméd it ye hadde a greet chiertee  
Toward mankynde, but how thanne may it bee,  
That ye swiche meenés make it to destroyen,  
Whiche meenés do no good, but evere anoyen ?  
I woot wel clerkés wol seyn as hem leste, 885

864. *sikes*, Corp.<sup>s</sup> *hertes*, *herte*. 881. *chiertee*, affection.



By argumentz, that al is for the beste,  
 Though I ne kan the causes nat y-knowe;  
 But, thilké God that madé wynd to blowe,  
 As kepe my lord; this is my conclusioun.  
 To clerkes lete I al disputisoun; 890  
 But woldé God that alle thise rokkés blake  
 Were sonken into hellé for his sake.  
 Thise rokkés sleen myn herté for the feere."  
 Thus wolde she seyn with many a pitous teere.

Hire freendés sawe that it was no disport 895  
 To romen by the see, but discomfort,  
 And shopen for to pleyen somwher elles.  
 They leden hire by ryveres, and by welles,  
 And eek in othere places delitables;  
 They dauncen, and they pleyen at ches and tables.

So on a day, right in the morwe tyde, 901  
 Unto a gardyn that was ther bisyde,  
 In which that they hadde maad hir ordinaunce  
 Of vitaille, and of oother purveiaunce,  
 They goon and pleye hem al the longé day; 905  
 And this was on the sixté morwe of May,  
 Which May hadde peynted with his softé shoures  
 This gardyn, ful of levés and of floures,  
 And craft of mannés hand so curiously  
 Arrayéd hadde this gardyn, trewely, 910  
 That nevere was ther gardyn of swich prys  
 But if it were the verray Paradys.

889. *is*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.890. *al*, E *al this*.897. *shopen*, planned.899. *delitables*, pleasant.900. *ches and tables*, chess and  
backgammon.906. *on*, E *in*.911. *prys*, price.

The odour of flourés and the fresshé sighte  
 Woldé han makéd any herté lighte  
 That evere was born, but if to greet siknesse, 915  
 Or to greet sorwé, helde it in distresse,  
 So ful it was of beautee with plesaunce.

At after dyner gonné they to daunce,  
 And synge also, save Dorigen allone,  
 Which made alwey hir compleint and hir moone,  
 For she ne saugh hym on the dauncé go 921  
 That was hir housbonde, and hir love also ;  
 But nathélees she moste a tyme abyde  
 And with good hopé lete hir sorwe slyde.

Upon this daunce, amongés othere men, 925  
 Dauncéd a squier biforn Dorigen,  
 That fressher was, and jolyer of array,  
 As to my doom, than is the monthe of May ;  
 He syngeth, daunceth, passynge any man  
 That is, or was, sith that the world bigan. 930  
 Therwith he was, if men sholde hym discryve,  
 Oon of the besté farynge man on lyve,  
 Yong, strong, right vertuous, and riche and wys,  
 And wel biloved, and holden in greet prys.  
 And, shortly, if the sothe I tellen shal, 935  
 Unwityng of this Dorigen at al,  
 This lusty squier, servant to Venus,  
 Which that y-clepéd was Aurelius,  
 Hadde loved hire best of any créature  
 Two yeer and moore, as was his áventure ; 940

914. *any*, Corp.<sup>2</sup> add *pensyf*.

924. *lete*, Corp.<sup>2</sup> *sche let*, *lete she*.

932. *of*, om. Corp.<sup>2</sup>

*man*, Lansd. *men*.

But nevere dorste he tellen hire his grevaunce ;  
 Withouten coppe he drank al his penaunce.  
 He was despeyréd, nothyng dorste he seye,  
 Save in his songés somwhat wolde he wreye  
 His wo, as in a general compleynyng ; 945  
 He seyde he lovede, and was biloved no thyng.  
 Of swich matéré made he manye layes,  
 Songés, compleintés, roundels, virelayes ;  
 How that he dorsté nat his sorwe telle,  
 But langwissheth as a furye dooth in helle ; 950  
 And dye he moste, he seyde, as dide Ekko  
 For Narcisus, that dorste nat telle hir wo.  
 In oother manere than ye heere me seye  
 Ne dorste he nat to hire his wo biwreye,  
 Save that paráventure somtyme at daunces, 955  
 Ther yongé folk kepen hir observaunces,  
 It may wel be he lookéd on hir face  
 In swich a wise as man that asketh grace ;  
 But no thyng wisté she of his entente ;  
 Nathelees it happéd, er they thennés wente, 960  
 By-causé that he was hire neighébour,  
 And was a man of worshipe and honour,  
 And hadde y-knowen hym of tymé yoore,  
 They fille in speche and forthé, moore and moore,  
 Unto this purpos drough Aurelius. 965  
 And whan he saugh his tyme he saydé thus :

"Madame," quod he, "by God that this world  
 made,

941. *tellen*, Camb.<sup>8</sup> *telle*.

950. *furye*, Heng.<sup>4</sup> *fuyre*, *fire*,  
perhaps a better reading.

944. *wreye*, betray.

965. *drough*, drew.

So that I wiste it myghte youre hertè glade,  
I wolde that day that youre Arveragus  
Wente over the see, that I, Aurelius, 970  
Hadde went ther nevere I sholde have come  
agayn ;

For wel I woot my servyce is in vayn,  
My gerdoun is but brestyng of myn herte.  
Madamé, reweth upon my peynés smerte,  
For with a word ye may me sleen or save ; 975  
Heere at youre feet God wolde that I were grave !  
I ne have, as now, no leyser moore to seye,—  
Have mercy, sweete, or ye wol do me deye !”

She gan to looke upon Aurelius :  
“Is this your wyl,” quod she, “and sey ye thus ?  
Nevere erst,” quod she, “ne wiste I what ye  
mente ; 981

But now, Aurelie, I knowe youre entente,—  
By thilké God that gaf me soule and lyf !  
Ne shal I nevere been untrewé wyf,  
In word ne werk, as fer as I have wit, 985  
I wol been his to whom that I am knyht !  
Taak this for fynal answeere, as for me ;”  
But after that in pley thus seyde she :

“Aurelie,” quod she, “by heighé God above !  
Yet wolde I graunté yow to been youre love, 990  
Syn I yow se so pitously complayne.  
Looké, what day that endélong Britayne,  
Ye remoeve alle the rokkés, stoon by stoon,  
That they ne letté shipe ne boot to goon,—

I seye whan ye han maad the coost so clene 995  
Of rokkès, that ther nys no stoon y-sene,  
Thanne wol I love yow best of any man.  
Have heer my trouthe, in al that evere I kan ! "

"Is ther noon oother grace in yow ? " quod he.

"No, by that Lord," quod she, "that makèd  
me ! 1000

For wel I woot that it shal never bityde.  
Lat swiché folies out of youre herté slyde ;  
What deyntee sholde a man han in his lyf  
For to go love another mannès wyf,  
That hath hir body whan so that hym lyketh ? "

Aurelius ful ofté soorè siketh. 1006

Wo was Aurelie, whan that he this herde,  
And with a sorweful herte he thus answerde :

"Madame," quod he, "this were an impossible,  
Thanne moot I dye of sodeyn deth horrible ! "

And with that word he turned hym anon. 1011

Tho coome hir othere freendès many oon,

And in the aleyes romeden up and doun,

And no thyng wiste of this conclusioun ;

But sodeynly bigonné revel newe, 1015

Til that the brighté sonnè loste his hewe,

For thorisonte hath reft the sonne his lyght,—

This is as muche to seye, as it was nyght ;

And hoom they goon in joye and in solas,

Save oonly wrecche Aurelius, allas ! 1020

He to his hous is goon with sorweful herte ;

He seeth he may nat fro his deeth asterte,

1003. *in*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *by*.

1022. *asterte*, escape.

Hym seméd that he felte his herté colde.  
Up to the hevene hise handés he gan holde,  
And on hise knowés bare he sette hym doun, 1025  
And in his ravyng seyde his orisoun.  
For verray wo out of his wit he breyde,  
He nysté what he spak, but thus he seyde.  
With pitous herte his pleynt hath he bigonne  
Unto the goddes, and first unto the sonne. 1030  
He seyde, "Appollo, god and governour,  
Of every plaunté, herbé, tree and flour,  
That gevest after thy declinacioun  
To ech of hem his tyme and his sesoun,  
As thyn herberwé chaungeth lowe or heighe ; 1035  
Lord Phebus, cast thy merciabie eighe  
On wrecche Aurelie, which that am but lorn !  
Lo, lord, my lady hath my deeth y-sworn  
Withouté gilt ; but thy benignytee  
Upon my dedly herte have som pitee ; 1040  
For wel I woot, lord Phebus, if yow lest  
Ye may me helpen, save my lady, best.  
Now vouchethsauf that I may yow devyse  
How that I may been holpen and in what wyse.  
" Youre blisful suster, Lucina the sheene, 1045  
That of the see is chief goddesse and queene,—  
Though Neptunus have deitee in the see,  
Yet emperisse aboven hym is she,—

1025. *knowes*, knees.1027. *breyde*, went suddenly.1035. *herberwe*, lodging.1036. *eighe*, eye.1037. *that*, om. E.1044. *holpen*, Heng.<sup>5</sup> *holpe*.1045. *Lucina*, or Diana, the moon.*sheene*, beautiful.

Ye knowe wel, lord, that right as hir desir  
 Is to be quyked, and lightned of youre fir, 1050  
 For which she folweth yow ful bisily,  
 Right so the see desیره naturelly  
 To folwen hire, as she that is goddesse,  
 Bothe in the see and ryveres moore and lesse.  
 Wherefore, lord Phebus, this is my requeste, 1055  
 Do this miracle, or do myn herté breste ;  
 That now next at this opposicioun,  
 Which in the signe shal be of the Leoun,  
 As preieth hire so greet a flood to brynge,  
 That fyve fadme at the leeste it oversprynge 1060  
 The hyste rokke in Armorik Briteyne ;  
 And lat this flood endure yerés tweyne,  
 Thanne certés to my lady may I seye,  
 ‘ Holdeth youre heste, the rokkés been awaye.’  
 “ Lord Phebus, dooth this miracle for me ; 1065  
 Preye hire she go no faster cours than ye ;  
 I seyè, preyeth your suster that she go  
 No faster cours than ye thise yerés two ;  
 Thanne shal she been evene atté fulle alway,  
 And spryng flood lasté bothé nyght and day ; 1070  
 And, but she vouchésauf in swich manere  
 To graunté me my sovereyn lady deere,  
 Prey hire to synken every rok adoun  
 Into hir owene dirké regioun  
 Under the ground, ther Pluto dwelleth inne, 1075

1060. *fadme*, fathoms.1064. *Holdeth youre heste*, keep  
your promise.1074. Under her name of  
Hecate Diana ruled also  
in hell.

Or nevere mo shal I my lady wyne.  
 Thy temple in Delphos wol I barefoot seke,—  
 Lord Phebus, se the teeris on my cheke,  
 And of my peyne have som compassioun ! ”  
 And with that word in swowne he fil adoun, 1080  
 And longé tyme he lay forth in a traunce.

His brother, which that knew of his penaunce,  
 Up caughte hym, and to bedde he hath hym  
 broght.

Dispeyréd in this torment and this thoght,  
 Lete I this woful creäturé lyè ; 1085  
 Chese he, for me, wher he wol lyve or dye.

Arveragus with heele and greet honour,  
 As he that was of chivalrie the flour,  
 Is comen hoom, and othere worthy men.  
 O, blisful artow now, thou Dorigen ! 1090  
 That hast thy lusty housbonde in thyne armes,  
 The fresshé knyght, the worthy man of armes,  
 That loveth thee as his owene hertes lyf.  
 Nothyng list hym to been ymaginatyf,  
 If any wight had spoke, whil he was oute, 1095  
 To hire of love ; he hadde of it no doute.  
 He noght entendeth to no swich mateere,  
 But daunceth, justeth, maketh hire good cheere ;  
 And thus in joye and blisse I lete hem dwelle,  
 And of the sike Aurelius wol I telle. 1100

In langour and in torment furyus,

1087. *hee*, health.

1096. *he hadde of it*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *he made ther-of*.

1100. *sike*, sick.

*wol I, E<sup>2</sup> I wol you.*



Two yeer and moore, lay wrecche Aurelyus  
 Er any foot he myghte on erthé gon ;  
 Ne confort in this tymé hadde he noon,  
 Save of his brother, which that was a clerk. 1105  
 He knew of al this wo and al this werk,  
 For to noon oother creäture certeyn,  
 Of this matere he dorsté no word seyn ;  
 Under his brest he baar it moore secree  
 Than evere dide Pamphilus for Galathee. 1110  
 His brest was hool withouté for to sene,  
 But in his herte ay was the arwé kene ;  
 And wel ye knowe that of a sursanure  
 In surgerye is perilous the cure,  
 But men myghte touche the arwe, or come therby.  
 His brother weepe and wayléd pryvèly, 1116  
 Til atté laste hym fil in remembraunce  
 That whiles he was at Orliens in Fraunce,—  
 As yongé clerkés, that been lykerous  
 To reden artés that been curious, 1120  
 Seken in every halke and every herne  
 Particuler sciénces for to lerne,—  
 He hym remembred that, upon a day,  
 At Orliens in studie a book he say  
 Of magyk natureel, which his felawe, 1125  
 That was that tyme a bachelor of lawe,—

1110. *Pamphilus*, etc., E gives  
 the quotation "Vulneror  
 et clausum porto sub  
 pectore telum," the open-  
 ing line of the 13th  
 century (?) poem of  
*Pamphilus de Amore*, of

which Galatea was the  
 heroine.

1113. *sursanure*, a wound  
 healed on its surface.

1119. *lykerous*, desirous.

1121. *halke and herne*, nook  
 and corner.

Al were he ther to lerne another craft,—  
 Hadde prively upon his desk y-laft,  
 Which book spak muchel of the operaciouns  
 Touchynge the eighte and twenty mansiouns 1130  
 That longen to the moone, and swich folye  
 As in oure dayes is nat worth a flye,—  
 For hooly chirchès feith, in oure bileve,  
 Ne suffreth noon illusion us to greve ;  
 And whan this book was in his remembraunce,  
 Anon for joye his hertè gan to daunce, 1136  
 And to hymself he seyde prively,  
 “ My brother shal be warissshed hastily,  
 For I am siker that ther be sciénces  
 By whiche men maken diverse apparences, 1140  
 Swiche as thise subtile tregetourès pleye ;  
 For ofte at feestès have I wel herd seye  
 That tregetours withinne an hallé large  
 Have maad come in a water and a barge,  
 And in the hallé rowen up and down. 1145  
 Somtyme hath seméd come a grym leoun,  
 And somtyme flourès sprynge as in a mede ;  
 Somtyme a vyne, and grapès white and rede ;  
 Somtyme a castel, al of lym and stoon,  
 And whan hym lykéd voyded it anoon,— 1150  
 Thus seméd it to every mannès sighte.  
 Now thanne conclude I thus, that if I myghte  
 At Orliens som oold felawe y-fynde,  
 That hadde these moonès mansions in mynde,

1133. *chirches feith*, Heng.<sup>3</sup> 1141. *tregetoures*, jugglers.

*chirche saith*.

1138. *warissshed*, cured.

1154. *these*, E<sup>3</sup> *this*, Heng.<sup>3</sup> *the*.

Or oother magyk natureel above, 1155  
 He sholde wel make my brother han his love ;  
 For with an apparence a clerk may make,  
 To mannés sighte, that alle the rokkés blake  
 Of Britaigne weren y-voyded everichon,  
 And shippés by the brynké comen and gon ; 1160  
 And in swich forme enduren a wowke or two.  
 Thanne were my brother warissshed of his wo,  
 Thanne moste she nedés holden hire biheste,  
 Or ellés he shal shame hire atté leeste."

What sholde I make a lenger tale of this ? 1165  
 Unto his brotheres bed he comen is,  
 And swich confort he gaf hym for to gon  
 To Orliens, that he up stirte anon,  
 And on his wey forthward thanne is he fare  
 In hope for to been lisséd of his care. 1170

Whan they were come almoost to that citee,  
 But if it were a two furlong or thre,  
 A yong clerk romynge by hymself they mette,  
 Which that in Latyn thriftily hem grette,  
 And after that he seyde a wonder thyng : 1175  
 "I knowe," quod he, "the cause of youre  
 comyng,"—

And er they ferther any footé wente,  
 He tolde hem al that was in hire entente.

This Briton clerk hym asked of felawes  
 The whiche that he had knowe in oldé dawes ;

1161. *wowke* (week), Heng.<sup>2</sup>  
*day*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *yeer*.

1170. *for*, om. Corp.<sup>3</sup>

1170. *lisséd*, relieved ; Corp.<sup>2</sup>  
*y-lisséd*.

1180. *dawes*, days.

And he answerde hym that they dedé were, 1181  
For which he weep ful ofté many a teere.

Doun of his hors Aurelius lighte anon,  
And forth with this magicien is he gon  
Hoom to his hous, and maden hem wel at ese ;  
Hem lakkéd no vitaille that myghte hem plese, 1186  
So wel arrayéd hous as ther was oon  
Aurelius in his lyf saugh nevere noon.

He shewed hym, er he wenté to sopeer,  
Forestés, parkés ful of wildé deer ; 1190  
Ther saugh he hertés with hir hornés hye,  
The gretteste that were evere seyn with eye,—  
He saugh of hem an hondred slayn with houndes,  
And somme with arwés blede of bittre woundes.  
He saugh, whan voyded were thise wildé deer,  
Thise fauconers upon a fair ryver, 1196  
That with hir hawkés han the heroun slayn.  
Tho saugh he knyghtés justyng in a playn,  
And after this he dide hym swich plesaunce  
That he hym shewed his lady on a daunce, 1200  
On which hymself he dauncéd, as hym thoughte ;  
And whan this maister that this magyk wroughte  
Saugh it was tyme, he clapte hise handés two,  
And, farewel ! al oure revel is y-do.  
And yet remoeved they nevere out of the hous 1205  
Whil they saugh al this sighté merveillous,  
But in his studie, ther as hise bookés be,  
They seten stille, and no wight but they thre.

1184. *forth with*, E<sup>2</sup> place *forth*  
after *magicien*.

1204. *is y-do*, E<sup>2</sup> was *ago*.

To hym this maister calléd his squier,  
 And seyde hym thus : " Is redy oure soper ? 1210  
 Almost an houre it is, I undertake,  
 Sith I yow bad oure soper for to make,  
 Whan that thise worthy men wenten with me  
 Into my studie, ther as my bookés be."

"Sire," quod this squier, "whan it liketh yow  
 It is al redy, though ye wol right now." 1216  
 "Go we thanne soupe," quod he, "as for the beste ;  
 This amorous folk somtyme moote han hir reste."

At after soper fille they in tretee  
 What sommé sholde this maistrés gerdoun be 1220  
 To remoeven alle the rokkés of Britayne,  
 And eek from Gerounde to the mouth of Sayne.

He made it straunge, and swoor, so God hym  
 save !

Lasse than a thousand pound he wolde nat have,  
 Ne gladly for that somme he wolde nat goon. 1225

Aurelius, with blisful herte anoon,  
 Answerdè thus : " Fy on a thousand pound !  
 This wydè world, which that men seye is round,  
 I wolde it geve, if I were lord of it !  
 This bargayn is ful dryve, for we been knyht. 1230  
 Ye shal be payéd trewely, by my trouthe,  
 But looketh now, for no negligence or slouthe  
 Ye tarie us heere no lenger than to morwe."

"Nay," quod this clerk, "have heer my feith to  
 borwe."

1224. Here H begins again.  
 1230. *dryve*, driven, completed.

1230. *knyht*, agreed.  
 1234. *to borwe*, in pledge.

To bedde is goon Aurelius whan hym leste, 1235  
And wel ny al that nyght he hadde his reste.  
What for his labour, and his hope of blisse,  
His woful herte of penaunce hadde a lisse.

Upon the morwe, whan that it was day,  
To Britaigne tooké they the righté way,— 1240  
Aurelius and this magicien bisyde ;  
And been descended ther they wolde abyde ;  
And this was, as thise bookes me remembre,  
The coldé, frosty sesoun of Decembre.

Phebus wox old, and hewed lyk latoun, 1245  
That in his hooté declynacioun  
Shoon as the burnéd gold, with stremés brighte ;  
But now in Capricorn adoun he lighte,  
Where as he shoon ful pale, I dar wel seyn.  
The bittré frostés with the sleet and reyn 1250  
Destroyéd hath the grene in every yerd ;  
Janus sit by the fyr with double berd,  
And drynketh of his bugle horn the wyn ;  
Biforn hym stant brawn of the tuskéd swyn,  
And “*Nowel*” crieth every lusty man. 1255

Aurelius in al that evere he kan  
Dooth to his maister chiere and reverence,  
And preyeth hym to doon his diligence  
To bryngen hym out of his peynés smerte,  
Or with a swerd that he wolde slitte his herte. 1260  
This subtil clerk swich routhe had of this man,  
That nyght and day he spedde hym that he kan

1238. *lisse*, relief.1245. *latoun*, latten.1248. *in Capricorn*, this would be  
on Dec. 13.

To wayten a tyme of his conclusioun,  
 This is to seye, to maken illusioun  
 By swich an apparence or jogelrye,— 1265  
 I ne kan no termés of astrologye,—  
 That she and every wight sholde wene and seye  
 That of Britaigne the rokkés were aweye,  
 Or ellis they were sonken under grounde.  
 So atté laste he hath his tyme y-founde 1270  
 To maken hise japés and his wrecchednesse  
 Of swich a supersticious cursednesse.  
 Hise tables Tolletanés forth he brought  
 Ful wel corrected, ne ther lakkéd nought,  
 Neither his collect, ne hise expans yeeris, 1275  
 Né hise rootés, ne hise othere geeris,  
 As been his centris, and hise argumentz,  
 And hise proporcioneles convenientz  
 For hise equaçions in every thyng ;  
 And by his eighté speere in his wirkyng 1280

1263. *wayten*, H<sup>4</sup> *wayte*.1264. *maken*, H<sup>5</sup> *make*.1265. *an*, E a.1273. *tables Tolletanes*, the astronomical tables, drawn up by order of Alphonso X. of Castille, and primarily adapted to the city of Toledo.1275. *collect*, a table of a planet's motion during a round number of years, as opposed to the *expans*, or separate, years.1276. *Ne his rootés*, etc. In his edition of the *Astrolabe* Dr. Skeat explains *root* as thetabulated quantity belonging to a given fixed date from which corresponding quantities for other dates can be reckoned. *Arguments* are the angles on which tabulated quantities depend.1280. *And by his eighte speere*, the astrologer was calculating the precession of the equinoxes by the distance between the true equinoctial point—the head of the fixed Aries—and the nearest convenient bright star, for which Alnath was chosen

He knew ful wel how fer Alnath was shove  
Fro the heed of thilke fixe Aries above,  
That in the nynté speere considered is ;  
Ful subtilly he hadde kalkuled al this.

Whan he hadde founde his firsté mansioun, 1285  
He knew the remenaunt by proporcioun,  
And knew the arisyng of his mooné weel,  
And in whos face, and terme, and everydeel,  
And knew ful weel the moonés mansioun  
Acordaunt to his operacioun ; 1290  
And knew also hise othere observaunces,  
For swiche illusiouns and swiche meschaunces  
As hethen folk useden in thilké dayes ;  
For which no lenger makéd he delayes ;  
But thurgh his magik for a wyke or tweye 1295  
It semed that alle the rokkés were aweye.

Aurelius, which that yet despeired is  
Wher he shal han his love or fare amys,  
Awaiteth nyght and day on this myracle ;  
And whan he knew that ther was noon obstácle,  
That voyded were thise rokkés everychon, 1301  
Doun to hise maistrés feet he fil anon,  
And seyde, "I, woful, wrecche Aurelius,  
Thanké yow, lord, and lady myn, Venus,  
That me han holpen fro my carés colde ;" 1305  
And to the temple his way forth hath he holde,  
Where as he knew he sholde his lady see ;

(see Skeat's ed. of *Astrolabe*).  
H reads *thre* for *eighte*, and  
*fourthe* for *nynte*, wrongly.

1297. *that yet*, H om. *that*,  
Heng.<sup>3</sup> om. *yet*.



And whan he saugh his tyme anon right hee,  
 With dredful herte and with ful humble cheere,  
 Salewed hath his sovereyn lady deere. 1310

“My righte lady,” quod this woful man,  
 “Whom I mooste drede, and love as I best kan,  
 And lothest were of al this world displese,  
 Nere it that I for yow have swich disese  
 That I moste dyen heere at youre foot anon ; 1315  
 Noght wolde I telle how me is wo bigon,  
 But certès, outhere moste I dye or pleyne.  
 Ye sle me giltélees for verray peyne,  
 But of my deeth, thogh that ye have no routhe,  
 Avyseth yow, er that ye breke youre trouthe. 1320  
 Repenteth yow, for thilké God above,  
 Er ye me sleen by-cause that I yow love,  
 For, madame, wel ye woot what ye han hight,—  
 Nat that I chalange anythyng of right,  
 Of yow, my sovereyn lady, but youre grace,— 1325  
 But in a gardyn yond, at swich a place,  
 Ye woot right wel what ye bihighten me,  
 And in myn hand youre trouthe pligheten ye  
 To love me best,—God woot ye seyde so,  
 Al be that I unworthy be therto. 1330  
 Madame, I speke it for the honour of yow,  
 Moore than to save myn hertès lyf right now,  
 I have do so as ye comanded me,  
 And, if ye vouchésauf, ye may go see. 1334

1310. *Salewed*, saluted.  
*sovereyn*, H *owne*.

1311. *righte*, H *soverayn*,  
 Heng.<sup>3</sup> *rightful*.

1317. *outhere*, either.

1318. *giltélees*, E<sup>4</sup> *giltlees*.

1327. *bihighten*, promised.

Dooth as yow list, have youre biheste in mynde,  
 For, quyk or deed, right there ye shal me fynde.  
 In yow lith al to do me lyve or deye,  
 But wel I woot the rokkés been awaye."

He taketh his leve and she astonied stood ;  
 In al hir facé nas a drope of blood, 1340  
 She wendé nevere han come in swich a trappe !  
 "Allas !" quod she, "that evere this sholde happe,  
 For wende I nevere by possibilité,  
 That swich a monstre or merveille myghté be ;  
 It is agayns the proces of nature." 1345  
 And hoom she goth a sorweful créature,—  
 For verray feere unnethé may she go.  
 She wepeth, wailleth al a day or two,  
 And swowneth, that it routhé was to see ;  
 But why it was to no wight toldé shee, 1350  
 For out of towne was goon Arveragus.  
 But to himself she spak, and seyde thus,  
 With facé pale and with ful sorweful cheer,  
 In hire compleynt as ye shal after heere.

"Allas !" quod she, "on thee, Fortune, I  
 pleyne, 1355  
 That unwar wrappéd hast me in thy cheyne,  
 For which tescapé woot I no socour,

1355. The next 102 lines in E have the marginal heading "The compleynt of Dorigene ageyns Fortune," and are accompanied by side-notes, summed up in the last "singulas

has historias et plures hanc materiam concernentes recitat beatus Ieronimus contra Iouinianum in primo suo libro capitulo 39<sup>o</sup>" (ch. 41, § 306 *sqq.* in Migne). The length of this complaint is the only blot on the story.

Save oonly deeth or ellés dishonour.  
 Oon of thise two bihoveth me to chese,  
 But nathélees yet have I levere lese 1360  
 My lif, than of my body have a shame,  
 Or knowe myselven fals, or lese my name ;  
 And with my deth I may be quyt, y-wis ;  
 Hath ther nat many a noble wyf er this,  
 And many a mayde, y-slayn hir self, allas ! 1365  
 Rather than with hir body doon trespas ?

“ Yis, certés, lo, thise stories beren witnesse  
 Whan Thretty Tirauntz ful of cursednesse  
 Hadde slayn Phidoun, in Atthenés at feste,  
 They comanded hise doghtres for tareste, 1370  
 And bryngen hem biforn hem in despit,  
 Al naked, to fulfille hir foul delit ;  
 And in hir fadrès blood they made hem daunce  
 Upon the pavement,—God geve hem myschaunce !  
 For which thise woful maydens, ful of drede, 1375  
 Rather than they wolde lese hir maydenhede  
 They privèly been stirt into a welle,  
 And dreynte hemselven, as the bookès telle.

“ They of Mecené leete enquere and seke,  
 Of Lacedomye, fifty maydens eke, 1380  
 On whiche they wolden doon hir lecherye,  
 But was ther noon of al that compaignye  
 That she nas slayn, and with a good entente  
 Chees rather for to dyé, than assente

1358. *elles*, om. E<sup>4</sup>.1360. *lese*, E<sup>8</sup> to *lese*.1370. *for tareste*, H<sup>4</sup> *for to areste*.1377. *stirt*, escaped.1378. *dreynte*, drowned.1384. *assente*, H<sup>4</sup> to *assente*.

To been oppressed of hir maydenhede. 1385  
 Why sholde I thanne to dyé been in drede?

“Lo, eek the tiraunt Aristóclides,  
 That loved a mayden heet Stymphalides,  
 Whan that hir fader slayn was on a nyght,  
 Unto Dianés temple goth she right, 1390  
 And hente the ymage in hir handés two,  
 Fro which ymagé wolde she nevere go :  
 No wight ne myghte hir handes of it arace  
 Til she was slayn, right in the selvé place.

“Now sith that maydens hadden swich despit  
 To been defouled with mannés foul delit, 1396  
 Wel oghte a wyf rather hirselveslee  
 Than be defouled, as it thynketh me.

“What shal I seyn of Hasdrubalés wyf  
 That at Cartage birafted herself hir lyf? 1400  
 For whan she saugh that Romayns wan the toun,  
 She took hir children alle, and skipte adoun  
 Into the fyr, and chees rather to dye  
 Than any Romayn dide hire vileynye.

“Hath nat Lucesse y-slayn herself, alas ! 1405  
 At Romé, whan [that] she oppresséd was  
 Of Tarquyn ? for hire thoughte it was a shame  
 To lyven whan she haddé loste hir name.

“The sevene maydens of Melesie, also,  
 Han slayn hemself for verray drede and wo, 1410  
 Rather than folk of Gawle hem sholde oppresse,—

1387. *Aristoclides*, tyrant of 1408. *haddé*, E<sup>4</sup> *had*.

Orchomenus.

1391. *hente*, seized.

1409. *Melesie*, Milesia.

1393. *arace*, tear away.

1410. *verray*, om. E<sup>4</sup>.

Mo than a thousand stories, as I gesse,  
Koude I now telle as touchynge this mateere.

“Whan Habradate was slayn, his wyf so deere  
Hirselven slow, and leet hir blood to glyde 1415  
In Habradates woundès depe and wyde,  
And seyde, ‘My body, at the leestè way,  
Ther shal no wight defoulen, if I may.’

“What sholde I mo ensamples heer-of sayn?  
Sith that so manye han hemselven slayn 1420  
Wel rather than they wolde defouléd be,  
I wol conclude that it is bet for me  
To sleen my self than been defouléd thus.  
I wol be trewe unto Arveragus,  
Or rather sleen myself in some manere, 1425  
As dide Democionès doghter deere  
By-cause that she wolde nat defouléd be.  
O Cedasus, it is ful greet pitee  
To reden how thy doghtren deyde, alas!  
That slowe herself for swich a manere cas. 1430  
As greet a pitee was it, or wel moore,  
The Theban mayden that for Nichanore  
Hirselven slow, right for swich manere wo.  
Another Theban mayden dide right so.  
For oon of Macidonye hadde hire oppressed 1435  
She with hir deeth hir maydenhede redressed.

1414. *Habradate*, see Xenophon, *Cyropedia*, lib. vii., for the story of Abradates and Panthea.  
1426. *Demociones doghter*, on the death of her be-

- trothed, Leosthenes, she killed herself rather than take another as husband.  
1432. *Nichanore*, refused by the Theban maiden because he was her conqueror.

What shal I seye of Nicerates wyf,  
 That for swich cas birafted hirself hir lyf?  
 How trewe eek was to Alcebiades  
 His love, that rather for to dyen chees 1440  
 Than for to suffre his body unburyed be?  
 Lo, which a wyf was Alcesté," quod she.  
 "What seith Omer of goode Penelopee?  
 Al Grece knoweth of hire chastitee.  
*Pardee*, of Laodomya is writen thus, 1445  
 That whan at Troie was slayn Protheselaus,  
 No lenger wolde she lyve after his day.  
 The same of noble Porcia telle I may;  
 Withouté Brutus koudé she nat lyve,  
 To whom she hadde al hool hir herté geve. 1450  
 The parfit wyfhod of Arthemesie  
 Honoured is thurgh al the Barbarie.  
 O Teuta, queene, thy wyfly chastitee  
 To allé wyvès may a mirour bee.  
 The samé thyng I seye of Bilyea, 1455  
 Of Rodogone, and eek Valeria."  
 Thus pleynéd Dorigene a day or tweye,  
 Purposynge evere that she woldé deye;  
 But nathélees upon the thriddé nyght

1437. *Nicerates wyf*, at the time of the Thirty Tyrants.

1440. *that*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

1445. *Laodomya*, E<sup>2</sup> *Lacedomya*.

1451. *Arthemesie*, of Caria, wife of Mausolus, whose tomb she built.

1453. *Teuta*, Queen of Illyria.

1454, 1455. Known only from E. The ladies are all mentioned by S. Jerome. Bilia was the wife of Duilius, consul B.C. 260; Rhodogone, daughter of Darius, killed her nurse for suggesting a second marriage.

1457. *pleyned*, E *pleyne*.

Hoom cam Arveragus, this worthy knyght, 1460  
 And asked hire why that she weepe so soore,  
 And she gan wepen ever lenger the moore.

"Allas!" quod she, "that evere I was born!  
 Thus have I seyde," quod she, "thus have I  
 sworn,"--

And toold hym al, as ye han herd bifore, 1465  
 It nedeth nat reherce it yow namoore.

This housbonde, with glad chiere, in freendly  
 wyse,

Answerde and seyde as I shal yow devyse,  
 "Is ther oght ellés, Dorigen, but this?"

"Nay, nay," quod she, "God helpe me so as  
 wys!" 1470

This is to mucche, and it were Goddés wille."

"Ye, wyf," quod he, "lat sleepen that is stille,  
 It may be wel paraventure yet to day;  
 Ye shul youre trouthe holden, by my fay!

For God so wisly have mercy upon me, 1475  
 I hadde wel levere y-stiked for to be,

For verray love which that I to yow have,  
 But if ye sholde youre trouthe kepe and save!

Trouthe is the hyeste thyng that man may kepe,"—  
 But with that word he brast anon to wepe, 1480

And seyde, "I yow forbede, up peyne of deeth,  
 That nevere whil thee lasteth lyf ne breeth,

1470. *as wys*, surely.

1473. *paraventure*, H *per-*  
*aunter*, which gives the  
 pronunciation.

1476. *y-stiked*, stabbed.

1480. *brast*, broke out; H  
*gan*.

1481. *of*, om. E.

To no wight telle thou of this aventure,—  
 As I may best I wol my wo endure,—  
 Ne make no contenance of hevynesse 1485  
 That folk of yow may demen harm or gesse."

And forth he cleped a squier and a mayde ;  
 "Gooth forth, anon, with Dorigen," he sayde,  
 "And bryngeth hire to swich a place, anon."  
 They take hir leve and on hir wey they gon, 1490  
 But they ne wisté why she thider wente :  
 He noldé no wight tellen his entente.

Paraventure an heepe of yow, y-wis,  
 Wol holden hym a lewéd man in this,  
 That he wol putte his wyf in jupartie. 1495  
 Herkneth the tale, er ye upon hire crie ;  
 She may have bettré fortune than yow semeth ;  
 And, whan that ye han herd the talé, demeth.

This squier, which that highte Aurelius,  
 On Dorigen that was so amorus, 1500  
 Of aventure happéd hire to meete  
 Amydde the toun, right in the quykkest strete,  
 As she was boun to goon the wey forth right  
 Toward the gardyn, ther as she had hight ;  
 And he was to the gardynward also ; 1505  
 For wel he spyéd whan she woldé go  
 Out of hir hous to any maner place ;  
 But thus they mette, of aventure or grace,  
 And he saleweth hire with glad entente,

1493-98. Known only from F.

1495. *jupartie*, jeopardy.1496. *hire*, ? *hym*.1502. *quykkest* (busiest), H<sup>4</sup>  
*quyke*.1503. *boun*, ready.



And asked of hire whiderward she wente ; 1510  
 And she answerdè, half as she were mad,  
 "Unto the gardyn, as myn housbonde bad,  
 My trouthe for to holde, allas ! allas !"

Aurelius gan wondren on this cas,  
 And in his herte hadde greet compassioun 1515  
 Of hire and of hire lamentacioun,  
 And of Arveragus, the worthy knyght,  
 That bad hire holden al that she had hight,  
 So looth hym was his wyf sholde breke hir  
 trouthe ;

And in his herte he caughte of this greet routhe,  
 Considerynge the beste on every syde, 1521  
 That fro his lust yet were hym levere abyde,  
 Than doon so heigh a cherlyssh wrecchednesse  
 Agayns franchise and allè gentillesse,  
 For which in fewè wordès seyde he thus : 1525

"Madame, seyeth to youre lord, Arveragus,  
 That sith I se his gretè gentillesse  
 To yow, and eek I se wel youre distresse,  
 That him were levere han shame,—and that were  
 routhe,—

Than ye to me sholde brekè thus youre trouthe,  
 I have wel levere evere to suffre wo, 1531  
 Than I departe the love bitwix yow two.  
 I yow relese, madame, into youre hond,  
 Quyt every surément and every bond  
 That ye han maad to me as heer biforn, 1535

1510. *asked*, H *askith*.1524. *and*, H and Camb. *of*.1530. *thus*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

Sith thilké tyme which that ye were born.  
My trouthe I plichte, I shal yow never reprove  
Of no biheste, and heere I take my leve,  
As of the treweste and the besté wyf,  
That evere yet I knew in al my lyf. 1540  
But every wyf be war of hire biheeste ;  
On Dorigene remembreth, atté leeste.  
Thus kan a squier doon a gentil dede  
As wel as kan a knyght, withouten drede."

She thonketh hym upon hir knees al bare, 1545  
And hoom unto hir housbonde is she fare,  
And tolde hym al, as ye han herd me sayd ;  
And be ye siker he was so weel apayd  
That it were impossible me to wryte.  
What sholde I lenger of this cas endyte? 1550

Arveragus and Dorigene his wyf  
In sovereyn blissé leden forth hir lyf ;  
Nevere eft ne was ther angre hem bitwene.  
He cherisseth hire, as though she were a queene,  
And she was to hym trewe for everemoore. 1555  
Of thisé folk ye gete of me namoore.

Aurelius, that his cost hath al forlorn,  
Curseth the tyme that evere he was born.  
"Allas !" quod he, "allas, that I bihighte  
Of puréd gold a thousand pound of wighte 1560  
Unto this philosophre ! How shal I do ?  
I se namoore but that I am fordo ;  
Myn heritagé moot I nedés selle,  
And been a beggere ; heere may I nat dwelle

1548. *apayd*, pleased.

1560. *puréd*, refined.

And shamen al my kynrede in this place, 1565  
 But I of hym may geté bettre grace ;  
 But nathélees I wole of hym assaye  
 At certeyn dayés yeer by yeer to paye,  
 And thanke hym of his greté curteisye.  
 My trouthè wol I kepe, I wol nat lye." 1570

With herté soor he gooth unto his cofre,  
 And broghté gold unto this philosophre,  
 The value of fyve hundred pound, I gesse,  
 And hym bisecheth, of his gentillesse,  
 To graunte hym dayés of the remenaunt, 1575  
 And seyde, "Maister, I dar wel make avaunt  
 I failled nevere of my trouthe as yit,  
 For sikerly my detté shal be quyt  
 Towardès yow, how evere that I fare  
 To goon a-begged in my kirtle bare ; 1580  
 But wolde ye vouchésauf, upon seuretee,  
 Two yeer, or thre, for to respiten me,  
 Thanne were I wel, for ellès moot I selle  
 Myn heritage, ther is namoore to telle."

This philosophre sobrelly answerde, 1585  
 And seyde thus, whan he thise wordès herde :  
 "Have I nat holdé covenant unto thee ?"  
 "Yes, certés, wel and trewely," quod he.  
 "Hastow nat had thy lady as thee liketh ?"  
 "No, no," quod he, and sorwefully he siketh. 1590  
 "What was the causè ; tel me if thou kan."  
 Aurelius his tale anon bigan,

And tolde hym al, as ye han herd bifoore ;  
It nedeth nat to yow reherce it moore.

He seide, "Arveragus, of gentillesse, 1595  
Hadde levere dye in sorwe and in distresse,  
Than that his wyf were of hir trouthe fals ;"  
The sorwe of Dorigen he tolde hym als,—  
How looth hire was to been a wikked wyf,  
And that she levere had lost that day hir lyf, 1600  
And that hir trouthe she swoor thurgh innocence,  
She nevere erst hadde herd speke of apparence ;  
"That made me han of hire so greet pitee,  
And right as frely as he sente hire me,  
As frely sente I hire to hym ageyn ; 1605  
This is al and som, ther is namoore to seyn."

This philosophre answerde, "Leevé brother,  
Everich of yow dide gentilly til oother ;  
Thou art a squier, and he is a knyght,  
But God forbedè, for his blisful myght, 1610  
But if a clerk koude doon a gentil dede,  
As wel as any of yow, it is no drede.

"Sire, I releessè thee thy thousand pound  
As thou right now were copen out of the ground,  
Ne nevere er now ne haddest knowen me ; 1615  
For, sire, I wol nat taken a peny of thee  
For al my craft, ne noght for my travaille.  
Thou hast y-payéd wel for my vitaille ;

1604, 1605. H reads : *By-cause  
hir housbond senté hir to  
me, And ryght as frely,  
etc.*

1606. *is* (1), om. E<sup>2</sup>.

1606. *al and som*, the whole story.

1611. *a* (2), H<sup>2</sup> *as*.

1614. *copen*, crept.

It is ynogh, and farewel, have good day!"  
And took his hors, and forth he goth his way. 1620

Lordynges, this questioun, thanne, wolde I aske  
now,  
Which was the moosté fre, as thynketh yow?  
Now telleth me, er that ye ferther wende.  
I kan namoore, my tale is at an ende.

1621. *thanne*, om. H<sup>3</sup>.

## GROUP G

### SECOND NUN'S TALE

#### *The Prologe of the Seconde Nonnes Tale*

THE ministre and the norice unto vice  
 Which that men clepe in Englissh ydelnesse,  
 That porter at the gate is of delices,  
 To eschue, and by hire contrarie hire oppresse,—  
 That is to seyn, by leueful bisynesse,— 5  
 Wel oghten we to don al oure entente,  
 Lest that the feend thurgh ydelnesse us hente,

For he that with hise thousand cordès slye  
 Continuelly us waiteth to biclappe,  
 Whan he may man in ydelnesse espye, 10

*Seconde Nonnes Tale*: a translation, at first close, afterwards free, of the life of S. Cecilia in the *Legenda Aurea* of Jacobus de Voragine. The stanzas on idleness were probably suggested by the Prologue of the French translator, Jehan

de Vignay, but in the Tale Chaucer follows the Latin.

3. *porter*, as in the *Roman de la Rose*.

at, E<sup>3</sup> of.

7. *hente*, seize; E<sup>3</sup> *shente*, harm.

9. *biclappe*, beat.

He kan so lightly cacche hym in his trappe,  
 Til that a man be hent right by the lappe,  
 He nys nat war the feend hath hym in honde :  
 Wel oghte us werche, and ydelnesse withstonde.

And though men dradden nevere for to dye, 15  
 Yet seen men wel by resoun, doutélees,  
 That ydelnesse is roten slogardye,  
 Of which ther nevere comth no good encrees ;  
 And seen that slouthe hir holdeth in a lees  
 Oonly to slepe and for to ete and drynke, 20  
 And to devouren al that othere swynk.

And for to putte us fro swich ydelnesse,  
 That cause is of so greet confusioun,  
 I have heer doon my feithful bisynesse,  
 After the Legende, in translacioun, 25  
 Right of thy glorious lif and passioun,  
 Thou with thy gerland wroght with rose and lilie,—  
 Thee, meene I, mayde and martir seint Cecilie.

*Invocacio ad Mariam*

And thow that flour of virginés art alle,  
 Of whom that Bernard list so wel to write ; 30  
 To thee, at my bigynnyng, first I call,

12. *lappe*, the border or fringe  
 of anything.

18. *encrees*, E<sup>2</sup> *n'encrees*.

19. *seen*, H *sin*, Heng.<sup>3</sup>  
*sithen(s)*.

19. *lees*, net.

21. *swynk*, labour for.

28. *martir*, E *mooder*.  
*seint*, om. EH.

Thou confort of us wrecches, do me endite  
 Thy maydens deeth, that wan thurgh hire merite,  
 The eterneel lyf, and of the feend victorie  
 As man may after reden in hire storie. 35

- Thow mayde and mooder, doghter of thy sone,  
 Thow welle of mercy, synful soulès cure,  
 In whom that God for bountee chees to wone,
- Thow humble, and heigh over every creature,
- Thow nobledest so ferforth oure nature, 40
- That no desdeyn the Makere hadde of kynde  
 His sone in blood and flessch to clothe and wynde.

- Withinne the cloistre blisful of thy sydis
- Took mannès shape the eterneel Love and Pees,  
 That of the tryne compas lord and gyde is, 45  
 Whom erthe, and see, and hevene, out of relees  
 Ay heryen ; and thou virgine wemmelees  
 Baar of thy body, and dweltest mayden pure,  
 The creatour of every creature.

- Assembled is in thee magnificence, 50
- With mercy, goodnesse, and with swich pitee,

36-56. These three stanzas are a translation, with variations, of some of the first twenty-one lines of Dante's *Paradiso*, Cant. 33, or perhaps of some Latin prayer or hymn which Dante may have imitated. The translated lines are here marked.

38. *chees to wone*, chose to dwell.

43. *the cloistre blisful of thy sydis*, the phrase is Chaucer's.

45. *tryne compas*, threefold space (?).

46. *out of relees*, ceaselessly.

47. *heryen*, praise.  
*wemmelees*, spotless.



That thou that art the sonne of excellence  
 · Nat oonly helpest hem that preyen thee,  
 · But often tyme, of thy benygnytee,  
 · Ful frely, er that men thyn help biseche 55  
 · Thou goost biforn and art hir lyvès leche.

Now help, thow meeke and blisful fairé mayde,  
 Me fleméd wrecche in this desert of galle;  
 Thynk on the womman Cananee, that sayde  
 That whelpes eten somme of the crommes alle 60  
 That from hir lordés table been y-falle,  
 And though that I, unworthy sone of Eve,  
 Be synful, yet acceptè my bileve.

And for that feith is deed withouten werkis,  
 So, for to werken, gif me wit and space, 65  
 That I be quit fro thennès that moost derk is.  
 O thou that art so fair and ful of grace,  
 Be myn advócat in that heighé place,  
 Theras withouten ende is songe Osanne,  
 Thow Cristès mooder, doghter deere of Anne! 70

And of thy light my soule in prison lighte,  
 That troubled is by the contagioun  
 Of my body, and also by the wighte  
 Of erthely lust and fals affeccioun!

56. *and art hir lyves leche*,

Chaucer's addition.

58. *flemed*, fugitive.

62. *sone of Eve*, the phrase

(cp. l. 78, *reden that I write*) shows that this legend was not written as one of the Canterbury Tales.

O havene of refut, O salvacioun 75  
 Of hem that been in sorwe and in distresse,  
 Now helpe, for to my werk I wol me dresse !

Yet preye I yow that reden that I write,  
 Forgeve me that I do no diligence  
 This ilke storie subtilly to endite, 80  
 For bothe have I the wordès and sentence  
 Of hym that at the seintès reverence  
 The storie wroot, and folwen hire legende ;  
 I pray yow that ye wole my werk amende.

*Interpretacio nominis Cecilie*

First wolde I yow the name of Seinte Cecile 85  
 Expowne, as men may in hir storie see.  
 It is to seye in Englissh " hevenes lilie,"  
 For purè chaastnesse of virginitee,  
 Or for she whitnesse hadde of honestee,  
 And grene of consciëce, and of good fame 90  
 The sootè savour, lilie was hir name ;

Or Cecile is to seye " the way to blynde,"  
 For she ensample was by good techynge ;  
 Or ellès Cecile, as I writen fynde,  
 Is joynèd by a manere conjoynyng 95

75. *refut*, refuge.

81. *sentence*, purport.

85. *yow*, om. E.

87. *hevenes lilie*, " cœli lilia."

89. *honestee*, purity.

91. *savour*, E *favour*.

92. *the way to blynde*, " cæcis  
 via."

Of "hevene" and "lia," and heere in figurynge  
 The "hevene" is set for thoght of hoolynesse  
 And "lia" for hire lastynge bisynesse.

Cecile may eek be seyð in this manere  
 "Wantynge of blyndnesse," for hir gretè light 100  
 Of sapience, and for hire thewès cleere ;  
 Or ellès, loo, this maydens name bright  
 Of "hevene" and "leos" comth, for which by right  
 Men myghte hire wel the hevene of peple calle,  
 Ensample of goode and wisè werkès alle. 105

For "leos" "peple" in Englissh is to seye ;  
 And right as men may in the hevene see  
 The sonne, and moone, and sterrès, every weye,  
 Right so men goostly in this mayden free  
 Syen of feith the magnanymytee, 110  
 And eek the cleernessee hool of sapience,  
 And sondry werkes brighte of excellence.

And right so as thise philosophres write  
 That hevene is swift, and round, and eek brennynge,  
 Right so was fairè Cecilie the white, 115  
 Ful swift and bisy evere, in good werkýnge ;  
 And round and hool in good perséverynge,  
 And brennynge evere in charite ful brighte :  
 Now have I yow declarèd what she highte.

96. Latin : "a celo et lya . . .  
     cælum per jugem con-  
     templationem, lya per  
     assiduam operationem." 101. *thewes*, good qualities.  
     103. *leos*, Gk. *λεώς*.  
     110. *Syen*, see.  
     111. *hool*, whole.

*Here bigynneth The Seconde Nonnes Tale of the lyf  
of Seinte Cecile*

This mayden bright, Cecile, as hir lif seith, 120  
Was comen of Romyans and of noble kynde,  
And from hir cradel up fostred in the feith  
Of Crist, and bar his gospel in hir mynde.  
She nevere cessèd, as I writen fynde,  
Of hir preyere, and God to love and drede, 125  
Bisekyng hym to kepe hir maydenhede.

And whan this mayden sholde unto a man  
Y-wedded be, that was ful yong of age,  
Which that y-clepèd was Valerian,  
And day was comen of hir marriage, 130  
She ful devout and humble in hire corage,  
Under hir robe of gold that sat ful faire,  
Hadde next hire flessch y-clad hire in an haire ;

And whil the organs maden melodie,  
To God allone in hertè thus sang she : 135  
"O Lord, my soule and eek my body gye  
Unwemmèd, lest that I confounded be ;"  
And for his love that dyde upon a tree,

125. *and God to love and drede,*

Chaucer's addition.

131. *ful devout*, etc., added.

133. *haire*, hair-shirt.

134. *organs*, E *orgues*.

136. *gye*, guide.

137. *Unwemmèd*, spotless.

I, E *it*.

138. *And for his love*, etc.,  
added.

Every secónde or thriddé day she faste  
 Ay biddyng in hire orisons ful faste. 140

The nyght cam, and to beddè moste she gon  
 With hire housbonde, as ofte is the manere,  
 And pryvèly to hym she seyde anon,  
 "O sweete and wel-bilovéd spousé deere,  
 Ther is a conseil, and ye wolde it heere, 145  
 Which that right fayn I wolde unto yow seye,  
 So that ye swere ye shul it nat biwreye."

Valerian gan faste unto hire swere  
 That for no cas, ne thyng that myghte be,  
 He sholdé nevere mo biwreyen here ; 150  
 And thanne at erst to hym thus seyde she :  
 "I have an aungel which that loveth me,  
 That with greet love, wher so I wake or sleepe,  
 Is redy ay my body for to kepe ;

And if that he may feelen, out of drede, 155  
 That ye me touche or love in vileynye,  
 He right anon wol sle yow with the dede,  
 And in youre yowthé thus ye sholden dye ;  
 And if that ye in clené love me gye,  
 He wol yow loven as me for youre clennesse, 160  
 And shewen yow his joye and his brightnesse."

139. *or, E<sup>3</sup> and.*

140. *biddyng*, praying.

142. *as ofte is the manere*,  
 Chaucer's tag ; so *and ye*  
*wolde it heere*, in l. 145.

147. *it, E me.*

153. *wher so I wake or sleepe*,  
 Chaucer's tag.

157. *with the dede*, added ; so  
*for youre clennesse*.

161. *shewen, H<sup>3</sup> show to.*

Valerian, corrected as God wolde,  
 Answerde agayn, "If I shal trusten thee  
 Lat me that aungel se, and hym biholde,  
 And if that it a verray angel bee, 165  
 Thanne wol I doon as thou hast prayèd me ;  
 And if thou love another man, for sothe,  
 Right with this swerd thanne wol I sle yow bothe !"

Cecile answerde anon right in this wise :  
 "If that yow list, the angel shul ye see, 170  
 So that ye trowe in Crist, and yow baptize.  
 Gooth forth to *Via Apia*," quod shee,  
 "That fro this toun ne stant but milès three,  
 And to the pourè folkès that ther dwelle  
 Sey hem right thus as that I shal yow telle. 175

"Tell hem that I, Cecile, yow to hem sente  
 To shewen yow the goode Urban the olde,  
 For secree needès, and for good entente ;  
 And whan that ye Seint Urban han biholde,  
 Telle hym the wordès whiche that I yow tolde, 180  
 And whan that he hath purgèd yow fro synne,  
 Thanne shul ye see that angel, er ye twynne."

Valerian is to the place y-gon,  
 And right as hym was taught by his lernynge,

169, 175. *right in this wise, as  
 that I shal yow telle,*  
 tags.

172. *Via Apia*, Chaucer seems  
 to take this as the name  
 of a place. The Latin

says "the third mile-  
 stone on the Appian  
 road."

178. *needes*, E *thynges*.  
*for good entente*, added ;  
*so er ye twynne* (depart).

He foond this hooly olde Urban anon, 185  
 Among the seintès buryeles lotynge ;  
 And he anon, withouten tariynge,  
 Dide his messáge ; and whan that he it tolde,  
 Urban for joye his handès gan up holde ;

The teeris from his eyen leet he falle. 190  
 "Almyghty Lord ! O Jhesu Crist," quod he,  
 "Sower of chast conseil, hierde of us alle,  
 The fruyt of thilké seed of chastitee  
 Thar thou hast sowe in Cecile, taak to thee !  
 Lo, lyk a bisy bee, withouten gile, 195  
 Thee serveth ay thyn owene thral Cecile ;

For thilké spouse that she took right now,  
 Ful lyk a fiers leoun, she sendeth heere  
 As meke as evere was any lamb, to yow : "  
 And with that word anon ther gan appere 200  
 An oold man, clad in whitè clothès cleere,  
 That hadde a book with lettre of gold, in honde,  
 And gan bifore Valerian to stonde.

Valerian, as deed, fil down for drede  
 Whan he hym saugh, and he up hente hym tho,  
 And on his book right thus he gan to rede : 206  
 "O Lord, o feith, o God, withouten mo ;

- |                                      |                                   |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 186. <i>lotynge</i> , "latitantem,"  | argumentosa," a delight-          |
| lurking.                             | ful phrase for Cecilia.           |
| 192. <i>hierde</i> (herdsman) of us  | 195. <i>withouten gile</i> , tag. |
| <i>alle</i> , added.                 | 203. Added.                       |
| 195. <i>bisy bee</i> , Latin : "apis | 205. <i>up hente</i> , uplifted.  |

O Cristendom, and Fader of alle also,  
 Aboven alle, and over alle, everywhere ;"  
 Thise wordes al with gold y-written were. 210

Whan this was rad, thanne seyde this oldé man,  
 "Leevestow this thyng ; or no ? Sey ye or nay."  
 "I leeve al this thyng," quod Valerian,  
 "For oother thyng than this, I dar wel say,  
 Under the hevene no wight thynké may." 215  
 Tho vanysshed this olde man, he nysté where,  
 And Pope Urban hym cristned right there.

Valerian gooth hoom and fynt Cecile  
 Withinne his chambre with an angel stonde.  
 This angel hadde of roses and of lilie 220  
 Córones two, the which he bar in honde ;  
 And first to Cecile, as I understonde,  
 He gaf that oon, and after gan he take  
 That oother to Valerian, hir make.

"With body clene, and with unwemméd thoght, 225  
 Kepeth ay wel thise córones," quod he ;  
 "Fro paradys to yow have I hem broght,  
 Ne nevere mo ne shal they roten bee,  
 Ne lese hir sooté savour, trusteth me ;

208. *O Cristendom*, Latin :  
 "unum baptisma."

209. *and*, om. E.

210. The repetition of l. 202 is  
 Chaucer's. H om. ll.  
 210-216.

216. *he nyste where*, not in  
 Latin.

218. *fynt*, finds.

222-224. *as I understonde, after  
 gan he take, hir make,*  
 tags.



Ne nevere wight shal seen hem with his eye, 230  
But he be chaast and hatè vileynye ;

And thow, Valerian, for thow so soone  
Assentedest to good conseil also,  
Sey what thee list, and thou shalt han thy boone."  
"I have a brother," quod Valerian tho, 235  
"That in this world I lovè no man so ;  
I pray yow that my brother may han grace  
To knowe the trouthe, as I do in this place."

The angel seyde, "God liketh thy requeste,  
And bothè with the palm of martirdom 240  
Ye shullen come unto his blissful feste ;"  
And with that word Tiburce his brother coom,  
And whan that he the savour undernoom  
Which that the roses and the lilies caste,  
Withinne his herte he gan to wondre faste ; 245

And seyde, "I wondre, this tyme of the year,  
Whennès that sootè savour cometh so  
Of rose and lilies that I smellè heer ;  
For though I hadde hem in myne handès two  
The savour myghte in me no depper go ; 250  
The sweetè smel that in myn herte I fynde  
Hath chaungèd me al in another kynde."

238. *in this place*, "mecum."

241. *unto his blissful feste*, "ad  
Dominum."

243. *undernoom*, perceived.

245. Added.

251. "Ita sum refectus."

Valerian seyde, "Two córones han we,  
 Snow white and rosé reed, that shynen cleere,  
 Whiche that thyne eyen han no myght to see; 255  
 And as thou smellest hem thurgh my preyere,  
 So shaltow seen hem, leevé brother deere,  
 If it so be thou wolt withouten slouthe  
 Bileve aright and knowen verray trouthe."

Tiburce answerdè, "Seistow this to me 260  
 In soothnesse, or in dreem I herknè this?"  
 "In dremès," quod Valerian, "han we be  
 Unto this tymè, brother myn, y-wis;  
 But now at erst in trouthe our dwellyng is."  
 "How woostow this," quod Tiburce, "in what  
 wyse?" 265  
 Quod Valerian, "That shal I thee devyse."

The aungel of God hath me the trouthe y-taught,  
 Which thou shalt seen, if that thou wolt reneye  
 The ydoles, and be clene, and ellès naught."  
 (And of the myracle of thise córones tweye, 270  
 Seint Ambrose in his preface list to seye,—  
 Solempnèly this noble doctour deere  
 Commendeth it, and seith in this manere :

"The palm of martirdom for to receyve  
 Seintè Cecile, fulfild of Goddès gifte, 275

258, 259. "Si credideris."

263. *brother myn, y-wis*, a tag;  
*so in what wyse, that*  
*shal I thee devyse.*

268. *reneye*, deny.

272, 273. The vain repetition is  
 Chaucer's.

273. *it*, E *hym*.

The world and eek hire chambre gan she weyve ;  
 Witnesse Tyburcés and Valerians shrifte,  
 To which God of his bountee woldé shifte  
 Córones two of floures wel smellynge,  
 And made his angel hem the córones brynge ; 280

The mayde hath broght thise men to blisse above ;  
 The world hath wist what it is worth certeyn,  
 Devocioun of chastitee to love.")  
 Tho shewed hym Cecile, al open and pleyn,  
 That alle ydoles nys but a thyng in veyn ; 285  
 For they been dombe and therto they been deve,  
 And chargéd hym hise ydoles for to leve.

"Who so that troweth nat this, a beest he is,"  
 Quod tho Tiburce, if that I shal nat lye,  
 And she gan kisse his brest that herdé this, 290  
 And was ful glad he koudé trouthe espye.  
 "This day I také thee for myn allye,"  
 Seydè this blissful, fairè maydè, deere,  
 And after that she seyde as ye may heere :

"Lo, right so as the love of Crist," quod she, 295  
 "Made me thy brotheres wyf, right in that wise

276. *hire chambre*, "thalamus."  
*weyve*, forgo.

277. *shrifte*, confession.

278-280. "Quos, domine, angelica manu odoriferis floribus coronasti."

281. *thise*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

286. Added.

289. *if that I shal nat lye*, with ll. 291, 293, 294, poor tags.

292. "Hodie te fateor meum esse cognatum," I own you are really of my kin.

Anon for myn allyee heer take I thee,  
 Syn that thou wolt thyne ydolès despise ;  
 Go with thy brother now, and thee baptise,  
 And make thee clene so that thou mowe biholde  
 The angeles face, of which thy brother tolde." 301

Tiburce answerde and seyde, " Brother dere,  
 First tell me whider I shal, and to what man ?"  
 " To whom ?" quod he ; " com forth with right  
 good cheere ;  
 I wol thee lede unto the Pope Urban." 305  
 " Til Urban, brother myn Valerian ?"  
 Quod tho Tiburce ; " woltow me thider lede ?  
 Me thynketh that it were a wonder dede.

Ne menestow nat Urban," quod he tho,  
 " That is so ofte dampned to be deed, 310  
 And woneth in halkes alwey to and fro,  
 And dar nat onès puttè forth his heed,  
 Men sholde hym brennen in a fyr so reed  
 If he were founde, or that men myghte hym spye,  
 And we also to bere hym compaignye ; 315

And whil we seken thilke divinitee,  
 That is y-hid in hevene pryvely,  
 Algate y-brend in this world shul we be !"

303. *whider*, E<sup>3</sup> *whider that*.

304. *right*, om. H. The line  
 is Chaucer's ; so also 306-  
 308.

311. *woneth in halkes*, dwells  
 in corners.

312. Chaucer's tag ; so *or that*  
*men myghte hym spye*.

To whom Cecile answerdê boldely,  
 "Men myghten dreden wel and skilfully 320  
 This lyf to lese, myne owene deerê brother,  
 If this were lyvyng oonly, and noon oother ;

But ther is better lif in oother place,  
 That nevere shal be lost, ne drede thee noght,  
 Which Goddês sone us toldê thurgh his grace ; 325  
 That Fadrês sone hath allê thyng y-wroght,  
 And al that wroght is with a skilful thoght  
 The Goost, that fro the Fader gan procede,  
 Hath sowled hem, withouten any drede.

By word and by myracle, Goddês sone, 330  
 Whan he was in this world, declarêd heere  
 That ther was oother lyf ther men may wone."

To whom answerde Tiburce, "O suster deere,  
 Ne seydestow right now in this manere,  
 'Ther nys but o God, lord in soothfastnesse,'—  
 And now of three how maystow bere witnessse ?" 336

"That shal I tellê," quod she, "er I go.  
 Right as a man hath sapiences three,  
 Memorie, engyn, and intellect also,  
 So in o beyng of divinitee 340

319. *boldely*, added ; so *myne owene deere brother*.

320. *skilfully*, reasonably.

322. "Si hæc sola esset vita."

324-329. *ne drede thee noght, with a skilful thoght*,

*withouten any drede, tags.*

329. *Hath sowled*, "animavit."

334, 335. *in this manere, lord in soothfastnesse*, added.

337. Added.

339. *engyn*, "ingenium."

Thré persónés may ther right wel bee ;"  
Tho gan she hym ful bisely to preche  
Of Cristés come, and of hise peynés teche ;

And many pointès of his passioun,  
How Goddés sone in this world was withholde 345  
To doon mankyndé playn remissioun,  
That was y-bounde in synne and carès colde ;  
Al this thyng she unto Tiburcé tolde,  
And after this Tiburce in good entente  
With Valerian to Pope Urban he wente, 350

That thanked God, and with glade herte and light,  
He cristned hym, and made hym in that place  
Parfit in his lernyngé, Goddés knyght ;  
And after this Tiburcé gat swich grace  
That every day he saugh in tyme and space 355  
The aungel of God, and every maner boone  
That he God axéd, it was sped ful soone.

It were ful hard by ordre for to seyn  
How manye wondres Jhesus for hem wroghte ;  
But atté laste, to tellen short and pleyn, 360  
The sergeantz of the toun of Rome hem soghte,

346. Hitherto Chaucer has translated literally, only eking out his stanzas with occasional tags ; he now begins to abridge, at the same time adding stanzas of his own.

355. *in tyme and space*, Chaucer's phrase.

360. *atte laste*, the offence alleged in the *Legend* is the burial of the bodies of martyrs.

And hem biforn Almache, the Prefect, broghte,  
Which hem apposed, and knew al hire entente,  
And to the ymage of Juppiter hem sente ;

And seyde, " Whoso wol nat sacrificse, 365  
Swape of his heed ; this my sentencé heer !"  
Anon thise martirs that I yow devyse,  
Oon Maximus that was an officer  
Of the Prefectes, and his corniculer,  
Hem hente, and whan he forth the seintés ladde,  
Hymself he weepe for pitee that he hadde. 371

Whan Maximus had herd the seintés loore,  
He gat hym of the tormentourés leve,  
And ladde hem to his hous, withouté moore,  
And with hir prechyng, er that it were eve, 375  
They gonnen fro the tormentours to reve,  
And fro Maxime, and fro his folk echone,  
The falsé feith, to trowe in God allone.

Cecilé cam, whan it was woxen nyght,  
With preestés, that hem cristned all y-feere ; 380  
And afterward, whan day was woxen light,  
Cecile hem seyde with a ful stedefast cheere,  
" Now, Cristés owene knyghtés, leeve and deere,  
Cast alle away the werkés of derknesse,  
And armeth yow in armure of brightnesse. 385

363. *apposed*, examined.366. *Swape of*, strike off.369. *corniculer*, adjutant.373. *tormentoures*, E<sup>4</sup> *tormentours*.374. *ladde*, H *bad*, Corp.<sup>8</sup> *hadde*.380. *y-feere*, together.

Ye han, for sothe, y-doon a greet bataille,  
 Youre cours is doon, youre feith han ye conserved.  
 Gooth to the corone of lyf, that may nat faille ;  
 The rightful Jugé, which that ye han served,  
 Shal geve it yow, as ye han it deserved ;" 390  
 And whan this thing was seyde as I devyse,  
 Men ledde hem forth to doon the sacrefise.

But whan they weren to the place y-brought,—  
 To tellen shortly the conclusioun,—  
 They nolde encense ne sacrificise right noght, 395  
 But on hir knees they setten hem adoun .  
 With humble herte and sad devocioun,  
 And losten bothe hir hevedes in the place ;  
 Hir soulés wenten to the kyng of grace.

This Maximus, that saugh this thyng bityde, 400  
 With pitous teeris tolde it anon right,  
 That he hir soulés saugh to hevene glyde,  
 With aungels ful of cleernesse and of light ;  
 And with his word converted many a wight,  
 For which Almachius dide hym so to-bete, 405  
 With whippe of leed, til he his lif gan lete.

Cecile hym took, and buryed hym anon  
 By Tiburce and Valerian softely  
 Withinne hire buryng-place under the stoon ;

386-392. Added.

398. *hevedes*, heads.406. *whippe*, H *whippes* ; Lat.

"plumbatis."

406. *his*, E *the*.*gan lete*, forsook.

409. Added.



And after this Almachius hastily 410  
 Bad hise ministres fecchen openly  
 Cecile, so that she myghte in his presence  
 Doon sacrifice, and Juppiter encense ;

But they, converted at hir wisè loore,  
 Wepten ful soore, and gaven ful credence 415  
 Unto hire word, and cryden moore and moore,  
 "Crist, Goddès sone, withouten difference  
 Is verray God, this is al oure sentence,  
 That hath so good a servant hym to serve ;  
 This with o voyes we trowen, thogh we sterve !" 420

Almachius that herde of this doynge  
 Bad fecchen Cecile that he myghte hire see ;  
 And alderfirst, lo this was his axynge,  
 "What maner womman artow ?" tho quod he.  
 "I am a gentil womman born," quod she. 425  
 "I axè thee," quod he, "though it thee greeve,  
 Of thy religioun, and of thy bileeve."

"Ye han bigonne youre question folily,"  
 Quod she, "that wolden two answeres conclude  
 In o demande ; ye axéd lewedly." 430  
 Almache answerde unto that similitude,

420. *sterve*, die.

426, 427. *though it thee greeve,*  
*and of thy bileeve*, tags.

429. *two answeres*, the question  
*What maner womman*  
*artow ?* ("cujus condi-

tionis es") she had taken  
 as referring to her family,  
 whereas it applied to  
 her faith.

431. *unto that similitude*, I am  
 afraid Chaucer was hard  
 up for a rhyme.

"Of whennés comth thyn answering so rude?"

"Of whennés?" quod she, whan that she was  
freyned;

"Of conscience, and of good feith unfeyned."

Almachius seyde, "Ne takestow noon heede 435  
Of my powér?" And she answerde hym this:  
"Youre myght," quod she, "ful litel is to dreede,  
For every mortal mannés power nys  
But lyke a bladdre, ful of wynd, y-wys;  
For with a nedles poynt whan it is blowe 440  
May al the boost of it be leyd ful lowe."

"Ful wrongfully bigonné thow," quod he,  
"And yet in wrong is thy perseveraunce;  
Wostow nat how oure myghty princes free  
Han thus comanded and maad ordinaunce, 445  
That every Cristen wight shal han penaunce,  
But if that he his Cristendom withseye,  
And goon al quit, if he wole it reneye?"

"Yowre princes erren, as youre nobleye dooth,"  
Quod tho Cecile, "and with a wood sentence 450  
Ye make us gilty, and it is nat sooth;  
For ye that knowen wel oure innocence,—  
For as muche as we doon a reverence  
To Crist, and for we bere a Cristen name,—  
Ye putte on us a cryme, and eek a blame; 455

433. *freyned*, asked.

436. *this*, om. E.

442-469. Chaucer's addition.

447. *withseye*, contradict.

448. *reneye*, deny.

450. *wood*, mad.

But we, that knowen thilké name so  
 For vertuuous, we may it not withseye."  
 Almache answerde, "Chees oon of thisé two,—  
 Do sacrifice, or Cristendom reneye,  
 That thou mowe now escapen by that weye." 460  
 At which the hooly blisful fairé mayde  
 Gan for to laughe, and to the jugé sayde,

"O jugé, confus in thy nycétee!  
 Woltow that I reneyé innocence,  
 To maké me a wikked wight?" quod she. 465  
 Lo, he dissymuleth heere in audience,  
 He stareth, and he woodeth in his advertence.

To whom Almachius, "Unsely wrecche!  
 Ne woostow nat how far my myght may strecche?

Han noght oure myghty princes to me geven, 470  
 Ye, bothé power and auctoritee  
 To maken folk to dyen or to lyven?  
 Why spekestow so proudly thanne to me?"

"I speké noght but stedfastly," quod she,  
 "Nat proudly, for, I speke as for my syde, 475  
 We haten deedly thilké vice of pryde;

And if thou dredé nat a sooth to heere,  
 Thanne wol I shewe al openly by right  
 That thou hast maad a ful gret lesyng heere.

459. *or, H<sup>2</sup> and.*

463. *nycetee, folly.*

467. *woodeth, is distraught.*  
*advertence, attention.*

468. *Almachius, H<sup>2</sup> Almachius*  
*seyde.*

*Unsely, unhappy.*

471. *and, H and eek.*

479. *lesyng, lie.*

Thou seyst thy princes han thee geven myght 480  
Bothe for to sleen and for to quyken a wight ;  
Thou that ne mayst but oonly lyf bireve,  
Thou hast noon oother power, ne no leve :

But thou mayst seyn thy princes han thee maked  
Ministre of deeth, for if thou speke of mo, 485  
Thou lyst, for thy power is ful naked ! ”  
“ Do wey thy booldnesse ! ” seyde Almachius tho,  
“ And sacrifie to oure goddès er thou go !  
I recchè nat what wrong that thou me profre,  
For I can suffre it as a philosophre, 490

But thilké wrongés may I nat endure,  
That thou spekest of oure goddès heere,” quod he.  
Cecile answerde, “ O nycé créature !  
Thou seydest no word syn thou spak to me  
That I ne knew therwith thy nycètee, 495  
And that thou were in every maner wise  
A lewéd officer and a veyn justise !

Ther lakketh no thyng to thyne outter eyen  
That thou nart blynd, for thyng that we seen alle  
That it is stoon,—that men may wel espyen,— 500  
That ilké stoon a god thow wolt it calle.  
I rede thee, lat thyn hand upon it falle,  
And taste it wel, and stoon thou shalt it fynde,  
Syn that thou seest nat with thyne eyen blynde.

It is a shamé that the peple shal 505  
 So scorné thee, and laughe at thy folye ;  
 For comunly men woot it wel overal  
 That myghty God is in hise hevenès hye,  
 And thise ymáges, wel thou mayst espye,  
 To thee, ne to hemself, mowen noght profite, 510  
 For in effect they been nat worth a myte."

Thise wordès and swiche other seyde she ;  
 And he weex wrooth, and bad men sholde hir lede  
 Hom til hir house, and " In hir hous," quod he,  
 " Brenne hire right in a bath of flambes rede ;" 515  
 And as he bad, right so was doon in dede,  
 For in a bath they gonne hire fasté shetten,  
 And nyght and day greet fyre they under betten.

The longé nyght, and eek a day also,  
 For al the fyr, and eek the bathès heete, 520  
 She sat al coold and felte of it no wo ;  
 It made hire nat a dropé for to sweete ;  
 But in that bath hir lyf she mosté lete,  
 For he, Almachius, with ful wikke entente,  
 To sleen hire in the bath his sondé sente. 525

Thre strokés in the nekke he smoot hire tho,  
 The tormentour, but for no maner chaunce  
 He myghté noght smyte al hir nekke atwo ;

505-511. Added.

510. *mowen*, H<sup>6</sup> *may*, *more*.516. *in*, H<sup>5</sup> *the*.518. *betten*, kindled.521. *felle of it*, H om. *it*; E<sup>3</sup>  
*feeled*, *feeledé*.525. *sonde*, messenger.528. *al hir*, H *hir fayre*.

And for ther was that tyme an ordinaunce,  
 That no man sholde doon men swich penaunce  
 The ferthe strook to smyten, softe or soore, 531  
 This tormentour ne dorstè do namoore ;

But half deed, with hir nekke y-corven there,  
 He lefte hir lye, and on his wey is went.

The Cristen folk which that aboute hire were,  
 With sheetès han the blood ful faire y-hent. 536  
 Thre dayès lyvèd she in this torment,  
 And nevere cessèd hem the feith to teche  
 That she hadde fostred ; hem she gan to preche ;

And hem she gaf hir moebles, and hir thyng, 540  
 And to the Pope Urban bitook hem tho,  
 And seyde, " I axèd this at hevene kyng,  
 To han respit thre dayès and namo,  
 To recomende to yow, er that I go,  
 Thise soulès, lo, and that I myghte do werche 545  
 Heere of myn hous perpetuelly a cherche."

Seint Urban, with his deknès, prively  
 The body fette, and buryed it by nyghte  
 Among hise other seintès honestly.  
 Hir hous the chirche of Sainte Cecilie highte ; 550  
 Seint Urban halwèd it, as he wel myghte,

535, 536. Added.

536. *blood*, H *body*.

540. *moebles*, goods.

541. *bitook*, committed.

547. *deknès*, deacons.

548. *The*, E *This*.

*fette*, fetched.

550. *highte*, H *yit highte*.

In which, into this day, in noble wyse,  
Men doon to Crist and to his seinte servyse.

*The prologe of the Chanons Yemannes Tale*

Whan toold was al the lyf of Seinte Cecile,  
Er we hadde riden fully fyve mile, 555  
At Boghton-under-Blee, us gan atake  
A man that clothed was in clothés blake,  
And undernethe he had a white surpys ;  
His hackeney, which that was al pomely grys,  
So swatté that it wonder was to see ; 560  
It semed as he had prikéd milés three.  
The hors eek that his Yeman rood upon  
So swatté that unnethé myghte it gon ;  
Aboute the peytrel stood the foom ful hye,  
He was of foom al flekkéd as a pye. 565  
A male tweyfoold upon his croper lay,  
It seméd that he caried lite array.  
Al light for somer rood this worthy man,  
And in myn herté wondren I bigan  
What that he was, til that I understood 570  
How that his cloke was sowéd to his hood,  
For which, whan I hadde long avyséd me,

554. *toold was al*, H<sup>b</sup> *ended was*.

555. *fyve mile*, i.e. from Ospringe.

556. *atake*, overtake.

558. *undernethe*, H<sup>b</sup> *under that*.  
*had a white*, E *wered a*.

559. *pomely grys*, dapple gray.

561. *priked*, ridden quickly.

563. *it*, H<sup>b</sup> *he*.

564, 565. Om. E.

564. *peytrel*, breast-piece.

566. *A male*, etc., a wallet lay  
doubled on his crupper.

569. *wondren*, E *to wondren*.

I deméd hym som Chanoun for to be.  
 His hat heeng at his bak down by a laas,  
 For he hadde riden moore than trot or paas ; 575  
 He hadde ay prikéd lik as he were wood.  
 A clote-leef he hadde under his hood  
 For swoot, and for to kepe his heed from heete ;  
 But it was joyè for to seen hym swete !  
 His forheed dropped as a stillatorie 580  
 Were ful of plantayne and of paritorie ;  
 And whan that he was come he gan to crye,  
 "God save," quod he, "this joly compaignye !  
 Faste have I prikéd," quod he, "for youre sake,  
 By-causé that I woldé yow atake 585  
 To riden in this myrie compaignye."  
 His Yeman eek was ful of curteisye,  
 And seyde, "Sires, now in the morwè tyde,  
 Out of youre hostelrie I saugh you ryde,  
 And warnéd heer my lord, and my soverayn, 590  
 Which that to ryden with yow is ful fayn ;  
 For his desport he loveth daliaunce."  
 "Freend, for thy warnyng God geve thee good  
 chaunce !"  
 Thanne seyde oure Hoost, "for certès it wolde  
 seme  
 Thy lord were wys, and so I may wel deme ; 595  
 He is ful jocunde also, dar I leye !

573. *som Chanoun*, the description accords with that of a "black Augustinian."  
 574. *laas*, string.

577. *clote-leef*, burdock-leaf.  
 581. *paritorie*, pellitory.  
 586. *this*, E *som*.  
 591. *that*, om. E ; Camb. *for*.  
 594. *certès*, E *certein*.



Can he oght telle a myrie tale or tweye,  
With which he gladé may this compaignye ? ”

“ Who, sire ? my lord ? ye, ye, withouten lye !

He kan of murthe, and eek of jolitee 600

Nat but ynough, also, sire, trusteth me ;

And ye hym knewé as wel as do I,

Ye woldé wondre how wel and craftily

He koudé werke, and that in sondry wise.

He hath take on hym many a greet emprise, 605

Which were ful hard for any that is heere

To brynge about, but they of hym it leere.

As hoomey as he rit amongés yow,

If ye hym knewe it wolde be for youre prow ;

Ye woldé nat forgoon his áqueyntaunce 610

For muchel good ; I dar leye in balaunce

Al that I have in my possessioun.

He is a man of heigh discrecioun ;

I warne yow wel, he is a passyng man.”

“ Wel,” quod oure Hoost, “ I pray thee tel me  
than 615

Is he a clerk or noon ? Telle what he is.”

“ Nay, he is gretter than a clerk, y-wis,”

Seydè this Yeman, “ and in wordès fewe,

Hoost, of his craft somwhat I wol yow shewe.

“ I seye, my lord kan swich subtilitee,— 620

But al his craft ye may nat wite at me,

And somwhat helpe I yet to his wirkyng,—

603. *craftily*, H<sup>b</sup> *thriftily*.

608. *rit*, rideth.

609. *prow*, profit.

614. *passyng*, extraordinary.

618. *this*, H<sup>a</sup> *the*.

621. *wite at*, impute to ; E  
*wite for* ; H *wite of*,  
know from.

That al this ground on which we been ridyng,  
 Til that we come to Caunterbury toun,  
 He koude al clenè turne it up-so-doun, 625  
 And pave it al of silver and of gold."

And whan this Yeman hadde this tale y-told  
 Unto oure Hoost, he seyde, "*Benedicitee!*  
 This thyng is wonder merveillous to me,  
 Syn that thy lord is of so heigh prudence, 630  
 By cause of which men sholde hym reverence,  
 That of his worshiþe rekketh he so lite.  
 His overslopè nys nat worth a myte,  
 As in effect to hym, so moot I go!  
 It is al baudy and to-tore also. 635  
 Why is thy lord so sluttissh, I the preye,  
 And is of power bettrè clooth to beye,—  
 If that his dede accordè with thy speche?  
 Tellè me that, and that I thee biseche."

"Why?" quod this Yeman, "wherto axe ye me?  
 God help me so, for he shal nevere thee!— 641  
 But I wol nat avowè that I seye,  
 And therfore keepe it secree, I yow preye,—  
 He is to wys, in feith, as I bileeve;  
 That that is overdoon it wol nat preeve 645  
 Aright; as clerkès seyn, it is a vice;  
 Wherefore in that I holde hym lewed and nyce;  
 For whan a man hath over greet a wit,  
 Ful oft hym happeth to mysusen it.

627. *this tale*, H<sup>5</sup> *thus*, Camb.  
*this*.

633. *overslope*, upper garment.

637. *clooth*, H<sup>5</sup> *clothis*, *clothes*.

641. *thee*, thrive.

645. *preeve*, stand testing.

So dooth my lord, and that me greveth soore. 650  
 God it amende ! I kan sey yow namoore."

"Ther-of no fors, good Yeman," quod oure  
 Hoost,

"Syn of the konnyng of thy lord thow woost,  
 Telle how he dooth, I pray thee hertély,  
 Syn that he is so crafty and so sly ; 655  
 Where dwellè ye, if it to tellè be ?"

"In the suburbès of a toun," quod he,  
 "Lurkyng in hernès, and in lanès blynde,  
 Where as thise robbours and thise theves by kynde,  
 Holden hir pryvee fereful residence, 660  
 As they that dar nat shewen hir presence ;  
 So faren we, if I shal seye the sothe."

"Now," quod oure Hoost, "yet lat me talke to  
 the ;

Why artow so discoloured of thy face ?"

"Peter !" quod he, "God geve it hardè grace,  
 I am so uséd in the fyr to blowe, 666  
 That it hath chaungéd my colóur, I trowe.  
 I am nat wont in no mirour to prie,  
 But swynké soore, and lerné multiplie ;  
 We blondren evere, and pouren in the fir, 670  
 And for al that we faille of our desir,  
 For evere we lakken oure conclusioun.  
 To muchel folk we doon illusioun,  
 And borwé gold, be it a pound or two,  
 Or ten, or twelve, or manye sommès mo, 675

651. *yow*, H<sup>4</sup> *now*.

658. *hernès*, corners.

669. *multiplie*, i.e. gold.

672. *lakken*, E. *lakke* of.

And make hem wenen, at the leestè weye,  
 That of a pound we koudè makè tweye;  
 Yet is it fals; but ay we han good hope  
 It for to doon and after it we grope;  
 But that sciéce is so fer us biforn 680  
 We mowen nat, al though we hadde it sworn,  
 It over-take, it slit away so faste.  
 It wole us maken beggers attè laste."

Whil this Yeman was thus in his talkyng  
 This Chanoun drough hym neer, and herde al  
 thyng 685

Which this Yeman spak, for suspecioun  
 Of mennés speche evere haddè this Chanoun;  
 For Catoun seith that he that gilty is  
 Demeth alle thyng be spoke of hym, y-wis.  
 That was the cause he gan so ny hym drawe 690  
 To his Yeman, to herkennen al his sawe,  
 And thus he seyde unto his Yeman tho:

"Hoold thou thy pees, and speke no wordés mo!  
 For if thou do, thou shalt it deere abyé!  
 Thou sclaudrest me, heere in this compaignye,  
 And eek discoverest that thou sholdest hyde." 696

"Ye?" quod our Hoost, "telle on what so  
 bityde;  
 Of al his thretyng rekkè nat a myte!"

681. *hadde it, E hadden.*682. *slit, slideth.*688. *Catoun: De Morib. i. 17:*  
 "Consciens ipse sibi de  
 se putat omnia dici."690. *That was the cause, H<sup>b</sup> By  
 cause of that.*691. *To, om. H<sup>b</sup>.*  
*to herkennen, H<sup>a</sup> that he  
 herde, Heng. and herde.*

"In feith," quod he, "namoore I do but lyte."

And whan this Chanoun saugh it wolde nat be,  
But his Yeman wolde telle his pryvêtee, 701  
He fledde away for verray sorwe and shame.

"A!" quod the Yeman, "heere shal arise a  
game,

Al that I kan anon now wol I telle,  
Syn he is goon,—the foulé feend hym quelle! 705  
For nevere heer-after wol I with hym meete,  
For peny ne for pound, I yow biheete!  
He that me broghté first unto that game,  
Er that he dye, sorwe have he and shame;  
For it is ernest to me, by my feith! 710  
That feele I wel, what so any man seith.  
And yet for al my smert, and al my grief,  
For al my sorwé, labour, and meschief,  
I koudé nevere leve it in no wise.  
Now woldé God, my witté myghte suffise 715  
To tellen al that longeth to that art;  
And nathélees yow wol I tellen part;  
Syn that my lord is goon I wol nat spare;  
Swich thyng as that I knowe I wol declare."

703. *a*, om. EH<sup>4</sup>.

706. *heer-after*, E *heer*.

707. *biheete*, promise.

711. *so*, E *that*.

## CANON'S YEOMAN'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth the Chanouns Yeman his Tale*

## [PART 1]

With this Chanoun I dwelt have seven yeer, 720  
 And of his science am I never the neer ;  
 Al that I hadde I havé lost ther-by,  
 And, God woot, so hath many mo than I.  
 Ther I was wont to be right fressh and gay  
 Of clothyng and of oother good array, 725  
 Now may I were an hose upon myn heed ;  
 And wher my colour was bothe fressh and reed,  
 Now is it wan and of a leden hewe,—  
 Who so it useth, sooré shal he rewe,—  
 And of my swynk yet bleréd is myn eye ; 730  
 Lo, which advantage is to multiplie !  
 That slidyng science hath me maad so bare,  
 That I have no good wher that evere I fare ;  
 And yet I am endetted so ther-by,  
 Of gold that I have borwéd, trewély, 735  
 That whil I lyve I shal it quité nevere,—  
 Lat every man be war by me for evere.  
 What maner man that casteth hym ther-to,  
 If he continue, I holde his thrift y-do ; 739  
 For, so helpe me God, ther-by shal he nat wynne,

728. *a*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.734. *yet*, moreover.736. *quite*, repay.

But empte his purs, and make hise wittès thynne ;  
 And whan he thurgh his madnesse and folye  
 Hath lost his owene good thurgh jupartye,  
 Thanne he exciteth oother folk ther-to,  
 To lesen hir good, as he hymself hath do ; 745  
 For unto shrewès joye it is and ese,  
 To have hir felawes in peyne and disese,—  
 Thus was I onés lernéd of a clerk.

Of that no charge, I wol speke of oure werk.

Whan we been there as we shul excercise 750  
 Oure elvysshe craft, we semen wonder wise,  
 Oure termès been so clerghal and so queynte ;  
 I blowe the fir til that myn hertè feynte.

What sholde I tellen eche proporcoun  
 Of thyngés whiché that we werche upon ; 755  
 As on fyve or sixe ounces, may wel be  
 Of silver, or som oother quantitee ;  
 And bisye me to tellé yow the names  
 Of orpymet, brent bonés, iren squames,  
 That into poudré grounden been ful smal ? 760  
 And in an erthen pot how put is al,  
 And salt y-put in and also papeer  
 Biforn thise poudrés that I speke of heer,  
 And wel y-covered with a lampe of glas ;  
 And muchel oother thyng which that ther was, 765  
 And of the pot and glasses enlutyng,  
 That of the eyr myghtè passe out no thyng,

743. *jupartye*, jeopardy, hazard.

752. *clerghal*, clerkly.

759. *squames*, scales.

761. *how*, om. E.

762. *papeer*, pepper.

764. *lampe*, a thin plate.

766. *enlutyng*, daubing with clay ; Heng.<sup>4</sup> *englutyng*.

And of the esy fir, and smart also,  
 Which that was maad, and of the care and wo  
 That we hadden in oure matires sublymyng, 770  
 And in amalgameyng and calceenyng  
 Of quyk-silver, y-clept mercurie crude ;  
 For alle our sleightes we kan nat conclude.  
 Oure orpyment and sublymed mercurie,  
 Oure grounden litarge eek on the porfurie, 775  
 Of ech of thise of ounces a certeyn,  
 Noght helpeth us, oure labour is in veyn ;  
 Ne eek oure spiritès ascencioun,  
 Ne oure matires that lyen al fix adoun,  
 Mowe in oure werkyng no thyng us availle ; 780  
 For lost is al oure labour and travaille,  
 And al the cost, a twenty devel way,  
 Is lost also, which we upon it lay.

Ther is also ful many another thyng  
 That is unto oure craft apertenynge, 785  
 Though I by ordre hem nat rehercé kan,  
 By-causé that I am a lewéd man ;  
 Yet wol I telle hem as they come to mynde,  
 Thogh I ne kan nat sette hem in hir kynde,—  
 As boole armonyak, vertgrees, boras, 790  
 And sondry vessels maad of erthe and glas ;  
 Oure urynals, and our descensories,  
 Violes, crosletz, and sublymatories,

771. *amalgameyng*, E *almal-*  
*gamyng*.

*calceenyng*, E *calceenyng*.

775. *litarge*, white lead.  
*on*, E *in*.

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776. *Of* (1), E *And*.

790. *boole armonyak*, astringent  
 earth, from Armenia.

792. *descensories*, vessels for ex-  
 tracting oil.

793. *croslets*, crucibles.



Cucurbitès, and alambikès eek,  
 And othere swichè, deere ynough a leek ; 795  
 Nat nedeth it for to reherce hem alle,—  
 Wátres rubifyng, and bolès galle,  
 Arsenyk, sal armonyak, and brymstoon ;  
 And herbès koude I telle eek many oon,  
 As egremoyne, valerian, and lunárie, 800  
 And othere swiche, if that me listé tarie ;  
 Oure lampés brennyng bothé nyght and day,  
 To brynge aboute oure purpos if we may ;  
 Oure fourneys eek of calcinacioun,  
 And of watrés albificacioun, 805  
 Unslekkéd lym, chalk, and gleyre of an ey,  
 Poudrés diverse, asshes, donge, pisse, and cley,  
 Cered pokettes, sal-peter and vitriole,  
 And diverse firès maad of wode and cole ;  
 Sal-tartre, alkaly and sal-preparat ; 810  
 And combust matires, and coagulat ;  
 Cley maad with hors and mannès heer, and oille  
 Of tartre, alum, glas, berme, wort and argoille,  
 Resalgar, and oure matires enbibyng,  
 And eek of oure matires encorporyng, 815  
 And of oure silver citrinacioun,

794. *Cucurbitès*, H<sup>5</sup> *Concubites*, flasks for distilling.

796. *for*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

797. *boles*, bull's.

800. *egremoyne*, agrimony.  
*lunarie*, moonwort.

803. *purpos if*, H<sup>6</sup> *craft if that*.

806. *gleyre of an ey*, white of an egg.

808. *Cered pokettes* (E *pottes*), sealed bags.

812. *and* (2), H<sup>6</sup> *or*.

813. *berme*, yeast.  
*argoille*, dregs of wine.

814. *Resalgar*, ratsbane.

816. *citrinacioun*, citron was a favourable colour in alchemy.

Oure cémentyng and fermentacioun,  
Oure yngottès, testès, and many mo.

I wol yow telle as was me taught also  
The fourè spiritès and the bodies sevene, 820  
By ordre, as ofte I herde my lord hem nevene.

The firstè spirit quyk-silver called is,  
The seconde orpyment, the thridde, y-wis,  
Sal-armonyak, and the ferthe brymstoon.  
The bodies sevene eek, lo, hem heere anon ! 825

Sol gold is, and Luna silver we threpe,  
Mars iren, Mercurie quyk-silver we clepe,  
Saturnus leed, and Juppiter is tyn,  
And Venus coper, by my fader kyn.

This cursèd craft who so wol excercise 830  
He shal no good han that hym may suffice ;  
For al the good he spendeth ther-aboutè  
He lesè shal, ther-of have I no doute.

Whoso that listeth outen his folie,  
Lat hym come forth and lernè multiplie ; 835  
And every man that oght hath in his cofre,  
Lat hym appiere and wexe a philosophre,  
Ascauncè that crafte is so light to leere !  
Nay, nay, God woot, al be he monk or frere,  
Preest or chanoun, or any oother wyght, 840  
Though he sitte at his book bothe day and night  
In lernyng of this elvysshe nycè loore,

817. *Oure*, E *And if oure*.

820. *fourè*, E *sevene*.

821. *nevene*, name.

826. *threpe*, call.

834. *Whoso*, E *Who*.  
*outen*, display.

838. *Ascaunce* (E *Ascauns*),  
forsooth.

842. *nyce*, foolish.

Al is in veyn, and, *parde*, muchel moore !  
 To lerne a lewéd man this subtiltee,—  
 Fy ! spek nat ther-of, for it wol nat bee ; 845  
 And konne he letterure, or konne he noon,  
 As in effect he shal fynde it al oon ;  
 For bothé two, by my salvacioun,  
 Concluden in multiplicacioun  
 Yliké wel, whan they han al y-do,— 850  
 This is to seyn, they failen bothé two.

Yet forgat I to maken rehersaille  
 Of watrés corosif, and of lymaille,  
 And of bodies mollificacioun,  
 And also of hire induracioun, 855  
 Oillés, ablucions, and metal fusible,—  
 To tellen al wolde passen any Bible  
 That owher is ; wherfore, as for the beste,  
 Of alle thise namés now wol I me reste,  
 For as I trowe I have yow toold ynowe 860  
 To reyse a feend, al looke he never so rowe.

A ! nay ! lat be ; the philosophres stoon,  
 Elixer clept, we sechen faste echoon,  
 For hadde we hym, thanne were we siker ynow ;  
 But, unto God of hevene I make avow, 865  
 For al oure craft, whan we han al y-do,  
 With al oure sleighte, he wol nat come us to.  
 He hath y-made us spenden muchel good,

846. *And*, H<sup>5</sup> *Al*.*letterure*, literature.848. *salvacioun*, E *savacioun*.853. *lymaille*, filings.858. *owher*, anywhere.861. *rowe*, raw.864. *we* (2), E *it*.867. *With*, H<sup>5</sup> *And*.868. *y-made*, E<sup>5</sup> *maad*, made.

For sorwe of which almoost we wexen wood,  
 But that good hopé crepeth in oure herte, 870  
 Supposynge ever, though we soré smerte,  
 To be releevéd by hym afterward.  
 Swich supposyng and hope is sharpe and hard ;  
 I warne yow wel it is to seken evere ;  
 That *futur temps* hath maad men dissevere, 875  
 In trust ther-of, from al that evere they hadde.  
 Yet of that art they kan hat wexen sadde,  
 For unto hem it is a bitter-sweete,—  
 So semeth it,—for nadde they but a sheete,  
 Which that they myghté wrappe hem inne at nyght,  
 And a brat to walken inne by day-lyght, 881  
 They wolde hem selle, and spenden on the craft ;  
 They kan nat stynté til no thyng be laft ;  
 And everemooré, where that evere they goon,  
 Men may hem knowé by smel of brymstoon. 885  
 For al the world they stynken as a goot ;  
 Hir savour is so rammyssh and so hoot  
 That though a man a milé from hem be  
 The savour wole infecte hym, trusté me.  
 Lo thus by smellyng, and threedbare array, 890  
 If that men liste, this folk they knowé may ;  
 And if a man wole aske hem pryvély,  
 Why they been clothéd so unthriftily,

871. *ever*, om. E.875. *temps*, tense.880. *that*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.  
at, H<sup>6</sup> a.881. *brat*, cloak ; H<sup>6</sup> *bak*,  
back-cloth.881. *walken*, H<sup>3</sup> *walke*.882. *the*, H<sup>5</sup> *this*.888. *a mile from hem*, H<sup>6</sup> *fro*  
*hem a myle*.890. *Lo*, E *And*.  
*smellyng*, E *smel*.

They right anon wol rownen in his ere  
 And seyn, that if that they espiéd were, 895  
 Men wolde hem slee by-cause of hir science.  
 Lo, thus this folk bitrayen innocence !

Passe over this, I go my tale unto.  
 Er that the pot be on the fire y-do,  
 Of metals with a certeyn quantitee 900  
 My lord hem tempreth, and no man but he,—  
 Now he is goon I dare seyn boldely,—  
 For as men seyn he kan doon craftily,  
 Algate I woot wel he hath swich a name,  
 And yet ful oft he renneth in a blame ; 905  
 And wite ye how ? Ful ofte it happeth so  
 The pot to-breketh, and farewel, al is go.  
 Thise metals been of so greet violence  
 Oure wallés mowe nat make hem resistance,  
 But if they weren wrought of lym and stoon, 910  
 They percen so, and thurgh the wal they goon,  
 And somme of hem synken into the ground,—  
 Thus han we lost by tymés many a pound,—  
 And somme are scatered al the floor aboute,  
 Somme lepe into the roof, withouten doute. 915  
 Though that the feend noght in oure sighte hym  
 shewe,

I trowe he with us be, that ilké shrewe !  
 In hellé, where that he is lord and sire,  
 Nis ther moore wo, ne moore rancour, ne ire ;

895. *that* (1), om. H<sup>6</sup>.

899. *that*, H<sup>4</sup> *than*.

912. *synken*, E<sup>2</sup> *synke*.

915. *lepe*, E *lepte*.

918. *is lord*, E *lord is*.

919. H<sup>5</sup> *Nis ther no more wo,*  
*ne anger, ne ire.*

Whan that oure pot is broke, as I have sayd, 920  
Every man chit and halt hym yvele apayd.

Somme seyde it was along on the fir makying,  
Somme seyde nay, it was on the blowyng,—  
Thanne was I fered, for that was myn office.

"Straw!" quod the thriddé, "ye been lewed  
and nyce, 925  
It was nat tempréd as it oghté be."

"Nay," quod the fourthé, "stynt and herkné  
me ;

By-cause our fir ne was nat maad of beech,  
That is the cause, and oother noon, so theeche."  
I kan nat telle wheron it was along, 930  
But wel I woot greet strif us is among.

"What!" quod my lord, "ther is namoore to  
doone ;

Of thise perils I wol be war eft-soone.  
I am right siker that the pot was crased ;  
Be as be may, be ye no thyng amased. 935  
As usage is, lat swepe the floor as swithe,  
Plukke up your hertés and beeth glad and blithe !"

The mullok on an heepe i-sweepéd was,  
And on the floor y-cast a canévas,  
And al this mullok in a syve y-throwe, 940  
And sifted and y-pikéd many a throwe.

"Pardee!" quod oon, "somwhat of oure metal

921. *chit*, chides.

*halt*, holds.

922. *along*, H<sup>b</sup> *long*.

929. *theech*, thrive I.

936. *as swithe*, quickly.

938. *mullok*, débris.

*i-sweepéd* (*y-swoopen*), E *sweepéd*.

941. *y-pikéd*, picked over; H<sup>b</sup> *y-plukked*.

Yet is ther heere, though that we han nat al.  
 Al though this thyng myshappèd have as now,  
 Another tyme it may be wel ynow. 945  
 Us mostè putte oure good in aventure ;  
 A marchant, *pardee* ! may nat ay endure,  
 Trusteth me wel, in his prosperitee.  
 Somtyme his good is drenchèd in the see,  
 And somtyme comth it sauf unto the londe." 950  
 "Pees !" quod my lord, "the nexte tyme I shal  
 fonde  
 To bryngen oure craft al in another plite ;  
 And but I do, sires, lat me han the wite ;  
 Ther was defaute in somewhat, wel I woot."  
 Another seyde the fir was over hoot ; 955  
 But, be it hoot or coold, I dar seye this,  
 That we concluden everemoore amys.  
 We faille of that which that we wolden have,  
 And in oure madnesse everemoore we rave ;  
 And whan we been togidres everichoon 960  
 Every man semeth a Salomon ;  
 But al thyng which that shyneth as the gold,  
 Nis nat gold, as that I have herd it told ;  
 Ne every appul that is fair at eye  
 Ne is nat good, what so men clappe or crye. 965  
 Right so, lo, fareth it amongès us :

949. *drenched*, H<sup>6</sup> *drowned*.953. *wite*, blame.956. *But*, E *And*.962. *al*, E *every*.*shyneth*, E *seineth*, Corp.<sup>2</sup>  
*semeth*.963. *it*, only in Corp.<sup>3</sup> ; ? om.  
and read *Ne is* for *Nis*.964. *at*, E *to*.965. *Ne is*, E *Nis*.966. *lo*, om. E.

Hé that semeth the wiseste, by Jhesus,  
 Is moost fool, whan it cometh to the preef;  
 And he that semeth trewest is a thief.  
 That shul ye knowe er that I ffo yow wende, 970  
 By that I of my tale have maad an ende.

## [PART II]

Ther is a Chanoun of Religioun  
 Amongés us wolde infecte al a toun.  
 Thogh it as greet were as was Nynyvee,  
 Rome, Alisaundre, Troye, and othere three. 975  
 His sleightés and his infinit falsnesse  
 Ther koudé no man writen, as I gesse,  
 Though that he lyvé myghte a thousand yeer.  
 In al this world of falshede nis his peer,  
 For in hise termés so he wolde hym wynde, 980  
 And speke his wordés in so sly a kynde,  
 Whanne he communé shal with any wight,  
 That he wol make hym doten anon right,  
 But it a feend be, as hymselven is.  
 Ful many a man hath he bigiled er this, 985  
 And wole, if that he lyvé may a while;  
 And yet men ride and goon ful many a mile  
 Hym for to seke and have his aqueyntaunce,  
 Noght knowynge of his falsé governaunce;  
 And if yow list to geve me audience, 990  
 I wol it tellé heere in youre presence.

968. *preef*, proof.972. *is*, E *was*.976. *sleightes*, EH *sleighte*.978. *lyve myghte*, H<sup>6</sup> *mighte*  
*lyven*.979. *nis*, E *nas*.



But, worshipful chanouns religious,  
 Ne demeth nat that I desclaundre youre hous,  
 Although my talè of a chanoun bee ;  
 Of every ordre som shrewe is, *pardee*, 995  
 And God forbede that al a compaignye  
 Sholde rewe o singuleer mannès folye.  
 To sclaundre yow is no thyng myn entente,  
 But to correcten that is mys, I mente.  
 This talè was nat oonly toold for yow, 1000  
 But eek for othere mo ; ye woot wel how  
 Thát among Cristès apostles twelve  
 Ther nas no traytour but Judas hymselfe.  
 Thanne why sholde al the remenant have a blame,  
 That giltles were ? By yow I seye the same, 1005  
 Save oonly this, if ye wol herkne me,—  
 If any Judas in youre covent be,  
 Remoeveth hym bitymés, I yow rede,  
 If shame, or los, may causen any drede ;  
 And beeth no thyng displeşed, I yow preye, 1010  
 But in this cas herketh what I shal seye.

In Londoun was a preest, an annuèleer,  
 That ther-inne dwellèd haddé many a yeer,  
 Which was so plesaunt and so servysable  
 Unto the wyf, where as he was at table, 1015  
 That she wolde suffre hym no thyng for to paye

993. *desclaundre*, H<sup>6</sup> *sclaundre*.  
 994. *Although*, E *Although that*.  
 997. *o singuleer*, one particular.  
 1012. *an*, om. E.  
       *annueleer*, a priest em-

ployed to sing anni-  
 versary masses for the  
 dead.  
 1013. *dwellèd hadde*, E *had*  
*dwellèd*.

For bord ne clothyng, wente he never so gaye ;  
And spendyng silver hadde he right ynow.  
Ther-of no fors, I wol procede as now,  
And tellè forth my tale of the chanoun 1020  
That broghtè this preest to confusioun.

This falsè chanoun cam upon a day  
Unto this preestès chambre wher he lay,  
Bisechyng hym to lene hym a certeyn  
Of gold, and he wolde quite it hym ageyn. 1025  
"Leene me a marc," quod he, "but dayès three,  
And at my day I wol it quiten thee ;  
And if so be that thow me fyndè fals  
Another day, do hange me by the hals."

This preest hym took a marc, and that as swithe,  
And this chanoun hym thanked oftè sithe, 1031  
And took his leve, and wentè forthe his weye,  
And at the thriddè day broghte his moneye,  
And to the preest he took his gold agayn,  
Wher-of this preest was wonder glad and fayn. 1035

"Certès," quod he, "no thyng anoyeth me  
To lene a man a noble, or two, or thre,  
Or what thyng were in my possessioun,  
Whan he so trewe is of condicioun  
That in no wise he breké wole his day ; 1040  
To swich a man I kan never seye nay."

"What !" quod this chanoun, "sholde I be  
untrewe ?

1023. *this*, H<sup>3</sup> *the*.1024. *lene*, lend.1029. *do hange me*, H<sup>1</sup> *hang me up*.1030. *as swithe*, quickly.1031. *sithe*, times.

Nay, that were thyng y-fallen al of newe.  
 Trouthe is a thyng that I wol evere kepe,  
 Unto that day in which that I shal crepe 1045  
 Into my grave, or ellis, God forbede!  
 Bileveth this, as siker as the Crede.  
 God thanke I, and in good tymé be it sayd,  
 That ther was nevere man yet yvele apayd  
 For gold ne silver that he to me lente; 1050  
 Ne nevere falshede in myn herte I mente;  
 And, sire," quod he, "now of my pryvêtee,—  
 Syn ye so goodlich han been unto me,  
 And kithéd to me so greet gentillesse,—  
 Somwhat to quyte with youre kyndénesse 1055  
 I wol yow shewe, and if yow list to leere.  
 I wol yow teché pleylny the manere  
 How I kan werken in philosophie;  
 Taketh good heede ye shul wel seen at eye  
 That I wol doon a maistrie er I go." 1060  
 "Ye," quod the preest, "ye, sire, and wol ye so?  
 Marie! ther-of I pray yow hertély."  
 "At youre comandément, sire, trewély,"  
 Quod the chanoun, "and ellis God forbeede."  
 Loo, how this theef koude his servicé beede!  
 Ful sooth it is that swiche profred servyse 1066  
 Stynketh, as witnessen thise oldé wyse;  
 And that ful soone I wol it verifie

1043. *thyng*, E<sup>2</sup> *a thyng*.1045. *Unto*, E<sup>2</sup> *Into*.1046. *or*, H<sup>3</sup> *and*.1047. *as the*, H<sup>4</sup> *as your*, *as is*  
*your*.1054. *kithed*, shown.1056. *and if*, E *if that*.1061. *sire*, E *sire*, *quod he*.1065. *beede*, *offer*.

In this chanoun, roote of alle trecherie,  
 That evere moore delit hath and gladnesse,— 1070  
 Swiche feendly thoughtés in his herte impresse,—  
 How Cristés peple he may to meschief brynge.  
 God kepe us from his false dissymulynge !

Noght wisté this preest with whom that he delt,  
 Ne of his harm comynge he no thyng felte. 1075  
 O sely preest, O sely innocent !  
 With coveitise anon thou shalt be blent.  
 O grácelees, ful blynd is thy conceite,  
 No thyng ne artow war of the deceite  
 Which that this fox y-shapen hath for thee ; 1080  
 Hise wily wrenchés thou ne mayst nat flee ;  
 Wherefore, to go to the conclusioun  
 That refereth to thy confusioun,  
 Unhappy man, anon I wol me hye  
 To tellen thyn unwit and thy folye, 1085  
 And eek the falsnesse of that oother wrecche,  
 As ferforth as my konnyngé may strecche.

This chanoun was my lord, ye wolden weene—  
 Sire Hoost, in feith, and by the hevenes queene,  
 It was another chanoun and nat hee, 1090  
 That kan an hundred foold moore subtiltee.  
 He hath bitrayéd folkés many tyme ;  
 Of his falshede it dulleth me to ryme.  
 Évere whan I speke of his falshede,

1074. *Noght*, H<sup>5</sup> *What*.1077. *blent*, blinded.1079. *ne*, om. H<sup>6</sup>.1080. *for*, H<sup>6</sup> *to*.1081. *wrenches*, deceits.1085. *thy* (2), E *his*, Camb.  
*heigh*.1087. *may*, H<sup>6</sup> *wol*, *wil*.1093. *falshede*, H<sup>6</sup> *falsnes*.1094. *whan*, E<sup>2</sup> *whan that*.

For shame of hym my chekés wexen rede,— 1095  
 Algatés they bigynnen for to glowe,—  
 For reednesse have I noon, right wel I knowe,  
 In my visagé, for fumés diverse  
 Of metals, whiche ye han herd me reherce,  
 Consumed and wasted han my reedénesse. 1100  
 Now taak heede of this chanons cursednesse.

“Sire,” quod he to the preest, “lat youre man  
 gon

For quyk-silver, that we hadde it anon,  
 And lat hym bryngen ounces two or three,  
 And whan he comth, as fasté shal ye see 1105  
 A wonder thyng which ye saugh nevere er this.”

“Sire,” quod the preest, “it shal be doon y-wis.”  
 He bad his servant fecchen hym this thyng,  
 And he al redy was at his bidding,  
 And wente hym forth, and cam anon agayn 1110  
 With this quyk-silver, soothly for to sayn ;  
 And toke thise ounces thre to the chanoun,  
 And he hem leyde faire and wel adoun,  
 And bad the servant colés for to brynge,  
 That he anon myghte go to his werkyng. 1115

The colés right anon weren y-fet,  
 And this chanoun took out a crossélet  
 Of his bosom, and shewed it to the preest.  
 “This instrument,” quod he, “which that thou  
 seest,

1103. *hadde it*, H<sup>5</sup> *it hadde*.

1111. *soothly*, H<sup>5</sup> *schortly*.

1113. *hem*, H<sup>5</sup> *it*.

1116. *y-fet*, *fetched*.

1117. *crossélet*, *crucible*.

Taake in thyn hand and put thy self ther-  
inne 1120

Of this quyk-silver an ounce, and heer bigynne,  
In the name of Crist, to wexe a filosofre.

Ther been ful fewe to whiche I woldé profre  
To shewen hem thus muche of my science :

For ye shul seen heer by experience, 1125  
That this quyk-silver wol I mortifye,

Right in youre sighte anon, I wol nat lye,  
And make it as good silver and as fyn,  
As ther is any in youre purse or myn,  
Or elléswhere, and make it malliable ; 1130  
And ellés holdeth me fals and unable  
Amongès folk for evere to appeere.

I have a poudre heer, that coste me deere,  
Shal make al good, for it is cause of al  
My konnyng, which that I yow shewen shal. 1135  
Voydith youre man and lat hym be ther-oute,  
And shette the doré whils we been aboute  
Oure pryvêtee, that no man us espie,  
Whilès we werke in this philosophie."

Al as he bad fulfillèd was in dede ; 1140  
This ilké servant anonright out yede,  
And his maister shettè the dore anon,  
And to hire labour spedily they gon.

1123. *to whiche*, H<sup>5</sup> *whiche that*, Camb. *to whiche that*.

1126. *mortifye*, transmute.

1127. *I wol nat*, H<sup>6</sup> *withouten*, *withoute*.

1128. *it*, om. E.

1135. *yow*, E *to yow*.

1136. *Voydith*, E *Voyde*.

1139. *Whiles*, E<sup>2</sup> *Whils that*.

1141. *yede*, went.

This preest at this curséd chanouns bidding  
 Upon the fir anon sette this thyng, 1145  
 And blew the fir and bisyed hym ful faste ;  
 And this chanoun into the crosselet cast  
 A poudre,—noot I wher-of that it was  
 Y-maad, outhur of chalk, outhur of glas,  
 Or somewhat ellès, was nat worth a flye,— 1150  
 To blynde with the preest, and bad hym hye  
 The colès for to couchen al above  
 The crosselet ; “ For in tokenyng I thee love,”  
 Quod this chanoun, “ thyne owene handès two  
 Shul werche al thyng which shal heer be do.” 1155  
 “ *Graunt mercy !* ” quod the preest, and was ful  
 glad,  
 And couchéd colès as that chanoun bad ;  
 And while he bisy was, this feendly wrecche,  
 This false chanoun,—the foulé feend hym fecche !—  
 Out of his bosom took a bechen cole, 1160  
 In which ful subtilly was maad an hole,  
 And therinne put was of silver lemaille  
 An ounce, and stoppéd was withouten faille  
 The hole with wex, to kepe the lemaille in ;  
 And understondeth, that this falsè gyn 1165  
 Was nat maad ther, but it was maad bifore ;  
 And othere thyngès I shal tellen moore  
 Herafterward, whiche that he with hym broghte,  
 Er he cam there hym to bigile he thoghte ;

1149. *outhur*, E<sup>2</sup> *or*, Pet. *or*  
*ellis*.

1151. *the*, H<sup>6</sup> *this*.

1152. *The*, H<sup>4</sup> *Thise*.

1152. *couchen*, lay.

1157. *coles*, E<sup>2</sup> *cole*.

1160. *took*, E *he took*.

1162. *lemaille*, filings.

And so he dide, er that they wente atwynne ; 1170  
 Til he had tervéd hym, he koude nat blynne.  
 It dulleth me, whan that I of hym speke ;  
 On his falshedé fayn wolde I me wreke,  
 If I wiste how, but he is heere and there,  
 He is so variaunt, he abit nowhere. 1175

But taketh heede now, sires, for Goddés love !  
 He took this cole of which I spak above,  
 And in his hand he baar it pryvély,  
 And whylés the preest couchéd bisily  
 The colés, as I toldé yow er this, 1180  
 This chanoun seyde, "Freend, ye doon amys,  
 This is nat couchéd as it oghté be ;  
 But soone I shal amenden it," quod he.  
 "Now lat me medle ther-with but a while,  
 For of yow have I pitee, by Seint Gile ! 1185  
 Ye been right hoot, I se wel how ye swete ;  
 Have heer a clooth, and wipe away the wete."  
 And whylés that the preest wipéd his face,  
 'This chanoun took his cole with hardé grace,  
 And leyde it above upon the myddeward 1190  
 Of the crosselet, and blew wel afterward,  
 Til that the colés gonné fasté brenne.

"Now geve us drynké," quod the chanoun thenne,

1170. *that*, H<sup>5</sup> om. ; Camb. *than*.

1171. *terved*, stripped. Dr. Skeat's restoration for the common reading *terned*.

1175. *he*, E<sup>2</sup> *that he*. *abit*, abideth.

1177. *this*, H<sup>6</sup> *his*.

1188. *whylés*, E *whils*.

*wiped his face*, H<sup>4</sup> *him wypped has*.

1189. *with harde* (Camb. *sory*) *grace*, H<sup>5</sup> *I schrewe his faas*.



"As swithe al shal be wel, I undertake.  
 Sittē we doun, and lat us myrie make;" 1195  
 And whan that this chanonēs bechen cole  
 Was brent, al the lemaille out of the hole  
 Into the crosselet fil anon adoun,  
 And so it mostē nedēs, by resoun,  
 Syn it so evene aboven couchēd was; 1200  
 But ther-of wiste the preest no thyng, alas!  
 He demēd alle the coles ylichē good,  
 For of that sleighte he no thyng understood;  
 And whan this alkamystre saugh his tyme,—  
 "Ris up," quod he, "sire preest, and stonde by  
 me, 1205  
 And for I woot wel ingot have ye noon,  
 Gooth walketh forth, and brynge us a chalk stoon,  
 For I wol make it of the samē shape  
 That is an ingot, if I may han hape;  
 And bryngeth eek with yow a bolle or a panne 1210  
 Ful of water, and ye shul se wel thanne  
 How that oure bisynesse shal thryve and preeve;  
 And yet, for ye shul han no mysbileeve,  
 Ne wrong conceite of me in youre absence,  
 I ne wol nat been out of youre presence, 1215  
 But go with yow, and come with yow ageyn."  
 The chambrē dorē, shortly for to seyn,  
 They openēd and shette, and went hir weye,

1198. *fil anon*, H<sup>5</sup> *anoon fel*.1200. *aboven*, E *aboven it*.1203. *that*, H<sup>6</sup> *the*.1205. *stonde*, E *sit*.1206. *ye*, E *I*.1208. *it*, E *oon*.1210. *EEK*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.1212. *thryve*, H<sup>5</sup> *happe*.1218. *went*, H<sup>5</sup> *wente forth*.

And forth with hem they carieden the keye,  
 And coome agayn withouten any delay. 1220  
 What sholde I tarien al the longè day?  
 He took the chalk and shoope it in the wise  
 Of an ingot, as I shal yow devyse.

I seye, he took out of his owene sleeve  
 A teyne of silver—yvele moot he cheeve!— 1225  
 Which that ne was nat but an ounce of weighte;  
 And taketh heede now of his cursed sleighte.

He shoope his ingot in lengthe and eek in  
 breede

Óf this teyne, withouten any drede,  
 So slyly that the preest it nat espide; 1230  
 And in his sleve agayn he gan it hide,  
 And fro the fir he took up his mateere  
 And in thyngot putte it with myrie cheere,  
 And in the water vessel he it caste, 1234  
 Whan that hym luste, and bad the preest as faste,  
 "Look what ther is, put in thin hand and grope,  
 Thow fyndé shalt ther silver, as I hope."  
 What, devel of hellé! sholde it ellis be?  
 Shavyng of silver silver is, *parde!*

He putte his hand in, and took up a teyne 1240  
 Of silver fyn, and glad in every veyne  
 Was this preest, whan he saugh that it was so.  
 "Goddés blessyng, and his moodres also,

1225. *teyne*, thin plate.

*cheeve*, succeed.

1226. *ne*, from Camb. only.

1227. *taketh*, E *taak*.

1228. *eek*, om. H<sup>9</sup>.

1233. *in*, H<sup>5</sup> *into*.

1236. *Look what ther*, E *What that heer*.

1238, 1239. Om. E.

1242. *that*, om. EH<sup>3</sup>.

And allé halwés, have ye, sire chanoun ! ”  
 Seydè this preest, “ and I hir malisoun ! 1245  
 But, and ye vouchésauf to techen me  
 This noble craft and this subtilitee,  
 I wol be youre in al that evere I may.”

Quod the chanoun, “ Yet wol I make assay  
 The seconde tyme, that ye may taken heede 1250  
 And been expert of this, and in youre neede  
 Another daye assaye in myn absence  
 This disciplyne, and this crafty science.  
 Lat take another ouncé,” quod he tho,  
 “ Of quyk-silver, withouten wordés mo, 1255  
 And do therwith as ye han doon er this  
 With that oother, which that now silver is.”

This preest hym bisieth in al that he kan  
 To doon as this chanoun, this curséd man,  
 Comanded hym, and faste he blew the fir, 1260  
 For to come to theffect of his desir ;  
 And this chanoun, right in the meenè while,  
 Al redy was the preest eft to bigile,  
 And for a contenaunce in his hand he bar  
 An holwè stikké,—taak kepe and be war,— 1265  
 In the ende of which an ouncé and namoore  
 Of silver lemaille put was (as bifore  
 Was in his cole) and stoppéd with wex weel,  
 For to kepe in his lemaille every deel.  
 And whil this preest was in his bisynesse, 1270

1244. *halwes*, saints.1247. *subtilitee*, E<sup>5</sup> *subtiltee*.1249. *chanoun*, E *preest*.1260. *he*, om. H<sup>6</sup>.1263. *the*, H<sup>6</sup> *this*.1268. *Was*, om. E.

This chanoun with his stikké gan hym dresse  
 To hym anon, and his poudré caste in  
 As he did er,—the devel out of his skyn  
 Hym terve, I pray to God, for his falshede !  
 For he was evere fals in thoght and dede,— 1275  
 And with this stikke above the crosselet,  
 That was ordeynéd with that falsé get,  
 He stired the colés, til relenté gan  
 The wex agayn the fir, as every man,  
 But it a fool be, woot wel it moot nede ; 1280  
 And al that in the stikké was out yede,  
 And in the crosselet hastily it fel.

Nów, good sires, what wol ye bet than wel ?  
 Whan that this preest thus was bigiled ageyn,  
 Supposynge noght but treuthé, sooth to seyn, 1285  
 He was so glad that I kan nat expresse  
 In no manere his myrthe and his gladnesse,  
 And to the chanoun he profred eftsoone  
 Body and good. "Ye," quod the chanoun soone,  
 "Though poure I be, crafty thou shalt me fynde ;  
 I warné thee yet is ther moore bihynde. 1291  
 Is ther any copér her-inne ?" seyde he.

"Ye," quod the preest, "sire, I trowe wel ther  
 be."

"Ellés go bye us som, and that as swithe.  
 Now, goodé sire, go forth thy wey and hy the." 1295  
 He wente his wey, and with the copér cam,

1274. *terve*, H<sup>6</sup> *torne*, *turne* ;  
 see l. 1171.

1277. *get* (E<sup>3</sup> *jet*), contrivance.

1281. *yede*, *ran*.

1286. *kan*, E *he kan*.

1294. *as*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

1295. *goode*, E *good*.

1296. *the*, H<sup>6</sup> *this*.

And this chanoun it in hise handès nam,  
And of that coper weyed out but an ounce.

Al to symple is my tonge to pronounce,  
As ministre of my wit, the doublesnesse 1300  
Of this chanoun, roote of alle cursednesse.  
He semed freendly to hem that knewe hym noght,  
But he was feendly bothe in werk and thoght.  
It weerieth me to telle of his falsnesse,  
And nathélees yet wol I it expresse 1305  
To that entent men may be war therby,  
And for noon oother causé, trewely.

He putté the ounce of coper in the crosselet,  
And on the fir as swithe he hath it set,  
And caste in poudre, and made the preest to  
blowe, 1310

And in his werkyng for to stoupé lowe,  
As he dide er, and al nas but a jape.  
Right as hym liste the preest he made his ape ;  
And afterward in the ingot he it caste,  
And in the panné putte it at the laste, 1315  
Of water. In he putte his owene hand ;  
And in his sleve, as ye biforn-hand  
Herdé me telle, he hadde a silver teyne ;  
He slyly tooke it out,—this curséd heyne,—  
Unwityng this preest of his falsé craft, 1320  
And in the pannés botme he hath it laft,

1297. *nam*, took.

1303. *werk*, E *herte*.

1306. *that entent*, E<sup>2</sup> *thentente*  
*that*.

1308. *the*, H<sup>6</sup> *this*, *his*.

1316. *Of*, E *Of the*.

1317. *biforen*, E<sup>2</sup> *biforn*.

1318. *he*, om. E.

1319. *heyne*, *villain*.

And in the water rombleth to and fro,  
 And wonder pryvèly took up also  
 The coper teyne, noght knowyngé this preest,  
 And hidde it, and hym henté by the breest, 1325  
 And to hym spak and thus seyde in his game,  
 "Stoupeth adoun, by God, ye be to blame,  
 Helpeth me now, as I dide yow whil-eer,  
 Putte in youre hand, and looketh what is theer."

This preest took up this silver teyne anon, 1330  
 And thanné seyde the chanoun, "Lat us gon  
 With thise thre teynés whiche that we han wrought  
 To som goldsmyth, and wite if they been ought ;  
 For, by my feith, I noldé for myn hood,  
 But if they weré silver fyn and good, 1335  
 And that as swithé preeved it shal bee."

Unto the goldsmyth with thise teynés three  
 They wente, and putte thise teynés in assay  
 To fir and hamer ; myghte no man seye nay,  
 But that they weren as hem oghté be. 1340

This sottéd preest, who was gladder than he ?  
 Was nevere brid gladder agayn the day,  
 Ne nyghtyngale in the sesoun of May.  
 Nas nevere man that lusté bet to synge,  
 Ne ladye lustier in carolyngé, 1345  
 Or, for to speke of love and wommanhede,  
 Ne knyght in armes to doon an hardy dede  
 To stonden in gracé of his lady deere,

1322. *rombleth*, E *rombled*.1328. *I*, E *a*.1333. *they been*, H<sup>5</sup> *it be*.1335. *if*, E *if that*.1340. *that*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.1344. *man*, H<sup>6</sup> *noon*.1346. *Or*, H<sup>5</sup> *And*.

Than hadde this preest this soory craft to leere ;  
 And to the chanoun thus he spak and seyde : 1350  
 "For love of God, that for us allé deyde,  
 And as I may deserve it unto yow,  
 What shal this receite costè, telleth now ?"

"By oure lady," quod this chanoun, "it is  
 deere,

I warne yow wel, for save I and a frere 1355  
 In Engèlond ther kan no man it make."

"No fors," quod he, "now, sire, for Goddès  
 sake,

What shal I payé ? Telleth me, I preye."

"Y-wis," quod he, "it is ful deere, I seye.

Sire, at o word, if that thee list it have, 1360  
 Ye shul paye fourty pound, so God me save ;  
 And nere the freendshipe that ye dide er this  
 To me ye sholdè payé moore y-wis."

This preest the somme of fourty pound anon  
 Of noblès fette, and took hem everichon 1365  
 To this chanoun, for this ilkè receit.

Al his werkyng nas but fraude and deceit.

"Sire preest," he seyde, "I kepè han no loos  
 Of my craft, for I wolde it kept were cloos,  
 And, as ye love me, kepeth it secree ; 1370  
 For, and men knewen al my soutiltee,  
 By God, they wolden han so greet envye  
 To me, by cause of my philosophye,  
 I sholde be deed ; ther were noon oother weye."

1354. *this*, H<sup>5</sup> *the*.

1365. *fette*, fetched.

1368. *loos*, care to have no  
 praise.

"God it forbeedé," quod the preest; "what  
sey ye?" 1375

Yet hadde I levere spenden al the good  
Which that I have,—and ellés wexe I wood!—  
Than that ye sholden falle in swiche mescheef."

"For youre good wyl, sire, have ye right good  
preef,"

Quod the chanoun, "and farwel, *grant mercy!*"  
He wente his wey and never the preest hym sy 1381  
After that day; and whan that this preest sholde  
Maken assay at swich tyme as he wolde  
Of this receit, farwel, it wolde nat be!  
Lo, thus byjapéd and bigiled was he. 1385  
Thus maketh he his introduccioun,  
To bryngé folk to hir destruccioun.

Considereth sires, how that in ech estaat,  
Bitwixé men and gold ther is debaat  
So ferforth, that unnethé is ther noon. 1390  
This multiplying blent so many oon,  
That, in good feith, I trowé that it bee  
The causé grettest of swich scarsetee.  
Philosophres speken so mystily  
In this craft, that men kan nat come therby, 1395  
For any wit that men han now-a-dayes.  
They mowe wel chiteren as doon these jayes,  
And in hir termés sette hir lust and peyne,

1377. *and*, E *or*.

1381. *sy*, saw.

1391. *blent*, blinds.

1393. *swich*, H *which*, Heng.<sup>2</sup> *this grete*.

1397. *as doon these*, E *as that doon*.



But to hir purpos shul they nevere atteyne.  
 A man may lightly lerne, if he have aught, 1400  
 To multiplie, and brynge his good to naught.  
 Lo, swich a lucre is in this lusty game  
 A mannès myrthe it wol turne unto grame,  
 And empten also grete and hevye purses,  
 And maken folk for to purchacen curses 1405  
 Of hem that han hir good therto y-lent.  
 O fy, for shamé ! they that han been brent,  
 Allas ! kan they nat flee the firès heete ?  
 Ye that it use I redé ye it leete,  
 Lest ye lese al, for "bet than nevere is late ;" 1410  
 Nevere to thryvé were to long a date.  
 Though ye prolle ay, ye shul it nevere fynde.  
 Ye been as boold as is Bayard the blynde,  
 That blondreth forth and peril casteth noon.  
 He is as boold to renne agayn a stoon, 1415  
 As for to goon bisidés in the weye.  
 So faren ye that multiplie, I seye ;  
 If that youre eyen kan nat seen aright,  
 Looke that youre myndé lakkè noght his sight,  
 For though ye looken never so brode, and stare,  
 Ye shul nat wynne a myte on that chaffare, 1421  
 But wasten al that ye may rape and renne.  
 Withdraweth the fir, lest it to fastè brenne,—  
 Medleth namooré with that art, I mene,

1403. *grame*, harm.1407. *O*, om. E.1412. *prolle*, prowl.1413. *Bayard*, a typical name  
for a horse.1421. *nat wynne a myte*, so  
Corp.<sup>4</sup>; EH *nothyng*  
(*noght*) *wynne*.1422. *rape and renne*, rob and  
plunder.

For if ye doon youre thrift is goon ful clene ; 1425  
 And right as swithe, I wol yow tellen heere,  
 What philosophres seyn in this mateere.

Lo, thus seith Arnold of the Newè-Toun,  
 As his *Rosarie* maketh mencion ;  
 He seith right thus, withouten any lye, 1430  
 Ther may no man mercurie mortifie,  
 But it be with his brother knowlechyng.

[Lo,] how that he which that first seyde this thyng  
 Of philosophres fader was, Hermes.

He seith how that the dragon doutelees 1435  
 Ne dyeth nat, but if that he be slayn

With his "brother ;" and that is for to sayn  
 By the dragon Mercurie, and noon oother,  
 He understood, and Brymstoon by his brother,  
 That out of Sol and Luna were y-drawe ; 1440

"And therfore," seyde he, "taak heede to my sawe ;  
 Lat no man bisye hym this arte for to seche,  
 But if that he thentencioun and speche  
 Of philosophres understandè kan ;  
 And, if he do, he is a lewèd man, 1445  
 For this science and this konnyng," quod he,  
 "Is of the secree of secrees, *pardee*."

1427. *What*, all MSS. *What that the*.

1428. *Arnold of the Newe-Toun*, Arnoldus de Villanova, a philosophical physician of the 13th century.

1431. *mortifie*, transmute.

1433. *Lo*, om. MSS.

1434. *Hermes, i.e.* Hermes Trismegistus.

1435. *the dragon*, Mercury.

1440. *Sol and Luna, i.e.* gold and silver.

1447. *of secrees, E the secretes*. The allusion is to the pseudo-Aristotelian *Secreta Secretorum*.

Also ther was a disciple of Plato  
 That on a tymé seyde his maister to,  
 As his book *Senior* wol bere witnesse, 1450  
 And this was his demande, in soothfastnesse,  
 "Telle me the namé of the privee stoon."  
 And Plato answerde unto hym anoon,  
 "Také the stoon that *Titanos* men name"—  
 "Which is that?" quod he. "*Magnasia* is the  
 same," 1455  
 Seydè Plato. "Ye, sire, and is it thus?  
 This is *ignotum per ignocius*.  
 What is *Magnasia*, good sire, I yow preye?"  
 "It is a water that is maad, I seye,  
 Of elementés fouré," quod Plato. 1460  
 "Telle me the rooté, good sire," quod he tho,  
 "Of that water, if it be youré wille."  
 "Nay, nay," quod Plato, "certein that I nylle;  
 The philosophres sworn were everychoon  
 That they sholden discovere it unto noon, 1465  
 Ne in no book it write in no manere,  
 For unto Crist it is so lief and deere,  
 That he wol nat that it discovered bee,  
 But where it liketh to his deitee

1450. *his book Senior*, "the book alluded to is printed in the *Theatrum Chemicum* under this title: 'Senioris Zadith fil. Hamuelis tabula chemica.' The story which follows of Plato and his disciples is there

told, with some variations, of Solomon" (Tyrwhitt). Dr. Skeat notes that the name Plato occurs three times only a few lines below, which explains Chaucer's mistake.

1461. *roote*, H<sup>6</sup> *roche*.

Man for tenspire, and eek for to deffende 1470  
 Whom that hym liketh ; lo, this is the ende."

Thanne conclude I thus, sith that God of  
 hevene

Ne wil nat that the philosophres nevene  
 How that a man shal come unto this stoon,  
 I rede as for the besté lete it goon ; 1475  
 For who so maketh God his adversarie,  
 As for to werken anythyng in contrarie  
 Of his wil, certés never shal he thryve,  
 Thogh that he multiplie terme of his lyve ;  
 And there a poynt ; for ended is my tale. 1480  
 God sende every trewe man boote of his bale.

*Amen.*

1470. *deffende*, forbid.

1473. *nevene*, name.

1475. *as*, *E us*.

1479. *of*, *H<sup>5</sup> unto*.

1481. *boote of his bale*, cure of  
 his harm.

## GROUP H

### *Words of Divers of the Pilgrims*

Woot ye nat where ther stant a litel toun,  
Which that y-clepéd is Bobbe-up-and-down,  
Under the Blee in Caunterbury weye?  
Ther gan oure Hoosté for to jape and pleye,  
And seyde, "Sires, what ! Dun is in the Myre ! 5  
Is ther no man for preyere ne for hyre,  
That wole awake oure felawe al bihynde?  
A theef myght hym ful lightly robbe and bynde.  
See how he nappeth, see how, for cokkés bones !  
As he wol fallé fro his hors atones. 10

2. *Bobbe-up-and-down*, usually identified with Harbledown, but in the parish of Thanington there is a field of "Up-and-Down" which, if, as is probable, the old Canterbury road took a somewhat different direction from the modern one, may be the site intended.

3. *the Blee*, Blean forest.

5. *Dun is in the Myre* (the horse is stuck), the name of an old game in which the company had to extricate a wooden "Dun" from an imaginary slough.

9. *how, for cokkes*, H<sup>4</sup> for *Goddes*.

10. *As*, H<sup>4</sup> *That*.

Is that a Cook of Londoun? with meschaunce!  
Do hym come forth, he knoweth his penaunce,  
For he shal telle a talè, by my fey!  
Although it be nat worth a botel hey.  
Awake, thou Cook," quod he, "God geve thee  
sorwe!

15

What eyleth thee to slepé by the morwe?  
Hastow had fleen al nyght, or artow dronke?  
Or hastow with som quene al nyght y-swonke,  
So that thow mayst nat holden up thyn heed?"

This Cook, that was ful pale and no thyng reed,  
Seyde to oure Hoost, "So God my soulè blesse, 21  
As ther is falle on me swich hevynesse,  
Noot I nat why, that me were levere slepe  
Thán the besté galon wyn in Chepe."

"Wel," quod the Maunciple, "if it may doon ese  
To thee, sire Cook, and to no wight displese 26  
Which that heere rideth in this compaignye,  
And that oure Hoost wole of his curteisye,  
I wol as now excuse thee of thy tale,  
For, in good feith, thy visage is ful pale, 30  
Thyne eyen daswen eek, as that me thynketh,  
And wel I woot thy breeth ful souré stynketh,  
That sheweth wel thou art nat wel disposed;  
Of me certeyn thou shalt nat been y-glosed.  
See how he ganeth, lo, this dronken wight! 35  
As though he woldé swolwe us anonright.  
Hoold cloos thy mouth, man, by thy fader kyn!

14. *botel hey*, bundle of hay.29. *as now*, E *now*.34. *y-glosed*, flattered.35. *ganeth*, yawns.

The devel of hellé sette his foot ther-in !  
 Thy curséd breeth infecté wole us alle.  
 Fy, stynkyng swyn ! fy, foulé moote thou falle ! 40  
 A ! taketh heede, sires, of this lusty man !  
 Now, sweete sire, wol ye justen atté fan ?  
 Therto me thynketh ye been wel y-shape !  
 I trowé that ye dronken han wyn ape,  
 And that is whan men pleyen with a straw." 45  
 And with this speche the Cook wax wrooth and  
 wraw,

And on the Manciple he gan noddé faste  
 For lakke of speche, and doun the hors hym caste ;  
 Where as he lay till that men up hym took.  
 This was a fair chyvachee of a Cook. 50  
 Allas ! he naddé holde hym by his ladel !  
 And er that he agayn were in his sadel  
 Ther was greet showvyng, bothé to and fro,  
 To lifte hym up, and muchel care and wo,  
 So unweeldy was this sory, palléd goost ; 55  
 And to the Manciplé thanne spak oure Hoost :

"By-causé drynke hath dominacioun  
 Upon this man, by my savacioun,  
 I trowé, lewedly he wolde telle his tale,  
 For were it wyn, or oold or moysty ale, 60  
 That he hath dronke, he speketh in his nose,

42. *justen atte fan*, ride at the quintain.

44. *wyn ape*, the lion, ape, sheep, and pig represented four degrees of drunkenness ; the ape

answering to the "joyous" stage, an unkind jest at the cook's sullenness.

46. *wraw*, indignant.

50. *chyvachee*, adventure.

And fneseth faste, and eek he hath the pose.  
 He hath also to do moore than ynough  
 To kepe hym and his capul out of slough ;  
 And if he fallè from his capul eftsoone, 65  
 Thanne shal we allè have ynogh to doone,  
 In lifyng up his hevy, dronken cors ;  
 Telle on thy tale, of hym make I no fors.

“But yet, Manciple, in feith thou art to  
 nyce,  
 Thus openly reprove hym of his vice ; 70  
 Another day he wole, peráventure,  
 Reclaymè thee and bryngé thee to lure,—  
 I meene, he spekè wole of smalé thynges  
 As for to pynchen at thy rekenynges :  
 That were nat honeste, if it cam to preef.” 75

“No,” quod the Manciple, “that were a greet  
 mescheef,  
 So myghte he lightly brynge me in the snare,  
 Yet hadde I levere payen for the mare  
 Which he rit on, than he sholde with me stryve.  
 I wol nat wratthe hym, al so moot I thryve ! 80  
 That that I spake I seyde it in my bourde ;  
 And wite ye what ? I have heer in a gourde  
 A draghte of wyn, ye, of a ripè grape,  
 And right anon ye shul seen a good jape.

62. *fneseth*, snorts ; H<sup>2</sup> *sneseth*.  
*pose*, catarrh.

64. *kepe*, E<sup>2</sup> *kepen*.

72. *lure*, the bait held out to  
 bring a hawk back to  
 the fist.

74. *pynchen*, cavil.

79. *Which*, E *Which that*.  
*rit*, rides.

80. *wratthe*, E *wratthen*.

81. *bourde*, jest.



This Cook shal drynke ther-of, if that I may. 85  
Up peyne of deeth, he wol nat seye me nay."

And certeynly, to tellen as it was,  
Of this vessel the Cook dranke faste, alas !  
What neded hym ? he drank ynough biforn ;  
And whan he haddé pouped in this horn, 90  
To the Manciple he took the gourde agayn ;  
And of that drynke the Cook was wonder fayn,  
And thanked hym in swich wise as he koude.

Thanne gan oure Hoost to laughen wonder  
loude,  
And seyde, "I se wel it is necessarie, 95  
Where that we goon, good drynke we with us  
carie,

For that wol turné rancour and disese  
Tacord and love, and many a wrong apese.

"O thou Bacus ! y-blessed be thy name !  
That so kanst turnen ernest into game, 100  
Worshipe and thank be to thy deitee !  
Of that mateere ye gete namoore of me ;  
Telle on thy tale, Manciple, I thee preye."

"Wel, sire," quod he, "now herkneth what I  
seye."

89. *hym*, H<sup>5</sup> *it*.

90. *pouped*, blown

96. *good*, E *that*.

98. *Tacord*, to accord.

99. *thou*, om. E<sup>6</sup>.

## MANCIPLE'S TALE

*Heere bigynneth The Manciples Tale of the Crowe*

Whan Phebus dwelled heere in this erthe adoun,  
 As oldē bookēs maken mencion;106  
 He was the moostē lusty bachiler  
 In al this world, and eek the best archer.  
 He slow Phitoun, the serpent, as he lay  
 Slepynge agayn the sonne upon a day,110  
 And many another noble worthy dede  
 He with his bowē wroghte, as men may rede.

Pleyen he koude on every mynstralcie,  
 And syngen that it was a melodie  
 To heeren of his cleerē voys the soun.115  
 Certēs the kyng of Thebēs, Amphion,  
 That with his syngyng walléd that citee,  
 Koude nevere syngen half so wel as hee.  
 Therto he was the semeliestē man  
 That is, or was, sith that the world bigan.120  
 What nedeth it hise fetures to discryve,  
 For in this world was noon so fair on lyve.  
 He was ther-with fulfild of gentillesse,  
 Of honour, and of parfit worthynesse.

*Manciple's Tale.* "The fable of the Crow, which is the subject of the Manciple's Tale, has been related by so many authors from Ovid down to Gower that it is impossible to say whom Chaucer prin-

cipally followed. His skill in new-dressing an old story was never, perhaps, more successfully exerted" (Tyrwhitt).

105. *erthe*, E *world*.

108. *In*, H<sup>4</sup> *Of*.

109. *Phitoun*, Python.

This Phebus that was flour of bachilrie, 125  
 As wel in fredom as in chivalrie,  
 For his desport, in signe eek of victorie  
 Of Phitoun, so as telleth us the storie,  
 Was wont to beren in his hand a bowe.

Now hadde this Phebus in his hous a crowe 130  
 Which in a cage he fostred many a day,  
 And taughte it speké, as men teche a jay.  
 Whit was this crowe as is a snow-whit swan,  
 And countrefete the speche of every man  
 He koudé, whan he sholdé telle a tale ; 135  
 Ther-with in al this world no nyghtyngale  
 Ne koudé, by an hondred thousand deel,  
 Syngen so wonder myrily and weel.

Now hadde this Phebus in his hous a wyf,  
 Which that he lovede moore than his lyf, 140  
 And nyght and day dide evere his diligence  
 Hir for to plese, and doon hire reverence ;  
 Save oonly, if the sothe that I shal sayn,  
 Jalous he was and wolde have kept hire fayn,  
 For hym were looth byjapéd for to be ; 145  
 And so is every wight in swich degree ;  
 But all in ydel, for it availleth noght.  
 A good wyf that is clene of werk and thoght  
 Sholde nat been kept in noon awayt certayn ;  
 And trewely the labour is in vayn 150  
 To kepe a shrewé, for it wol nat bee.

132. *teche*, H<sup>2</sup> *doon*.133. *is*, om. E.143. *if*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.147. *in ydel*, H<sup>4</sup> *for nought*.149. *in noon awayt*, under any  
 watch.

This holde I for a verray nycetee  
 To spillè labour for to kepé wyves ;  
 Thus writen oldé clerkés in hir lyves.

But now to purpos, as I first bigan ; 155  
 This worthy Phebus dooth all that he kan  
 To plesen hire, wenyng by swich plesaunce,  
 And for his manhede and his governaunce,  
 That no man sholde han put hym from hire grace ;  
 But God it woot, ther may no man embrace 160  
 As to destreyne a thyng which that nature  
 Hath natureelly set in a creature.

Taak any bryd, and put it in a cage,  
 And do al thyn entente, and thy corage,  
 To fostre it tendrely with mete and drynke 165  
 Of allé deyntees that thou kanst bithynke,  
 And keepe it al so clenly as thou may,  
 Al though his cage of gold be never so gay,  
 Yet hath this brid by twenty thousand foold  
 Levere in a forest that is rude and coold, 170  
 Goon etè wormés and swich wrecchednesse ;  
 For evere this brid wol doon his bisynesse  
 To escape out of his cagé, if he may ;  
 His libertee this brid desireth ay.

Lat take a cat, and fostre hym wel with milk 175  
 And tendré flessch, and make his couche of silk,  
 And lat hym seen a mous go by the wal,

157. *by*, E<sup>2</sup> *that*, Heng. *for*.

161. *destreyne*, constrain.

167. *clenly*, H *kyndly*.

170. *in a*, H *to be in*.

170. *rude*, Corp.<sup>3</sup> *wilde* ; H  
*wyd*, omitting *that is*.

173. *if*, H<sup>3</sup> *when*.

176. *couche*, H *bed*.

Anon he weyveth milk, and flessch, and al,  
And every deyntee that is in that hous,  
Swich appetit he hath to ete a mous. 180  
Lo, heere hath lust his dominacioun,  
And appetit fleemeth discrecioun.

A she-wolf hath also a vileyns kynde ;  
The lewedesté wolf that she may fynde,  
Or leest of reputacioun, that wol she take 185  
In tymé whan hir lust to han a make.

Alle thise ensamples speke I by thise men  
That been untrewé, and no thyng by wommen ;  
For men han evere a likerous appetit,  
On lower thyng to parfourne hir delit 190  
Than on hire wyvés, be they never so faire,  
Ne never so trewé, ne so debonaire ;  
Flessch is so newéfangel, with meschaunce !  
That we ne konne in no thyng han plesaunce,  
That sowneth into vertu, any while. 195

This Phebus, which that thoghte upon no gile,  
Deceyvéd was for al his jolitee,  
For under hym another haddé shee,  
A man of litel reputacioun,  
Nat worth to Phebus in comparisoun ; 200  
The moore harm is, it happeth ofté so,  
Of which ther cometh muchel harm and wo.

And so bifel, whan Phebus was absent,  
His wyf anon hath for hir lemman sent.

178. *weyveth*, abandons.182. *fleemeth*, chases away.183. *kynde*, nature.185. *that*, H *him*.187. *spcke*, H *tell*.195. *sowneth into*, tends to.

"Hir lemman?" certès this is a knavyssh speche!  
 Forgeveth it me, and that I yow biseche. 206

The wisè Plato seith, as ye may rede,  
 "The word moot nede accordé with the dede;"  
 If men shal tellé properly a thyng  
 The word moot cosyn be to the werkyng. 210  
 I am a boystous man; right thus seye I,  
 Ther nys no differencé trewely  
 Bitwixe a wyf that is of heigh degree,  
 If of hire body dishoneste she bee,  
 And a pouré wenche, oother than this,— 215  
 If it so be they werké both amys,—  
 But that the gentile in hire estaat above,  
 She shal be cleped his "lady," as in love;  
 And for that oother is a poure womman,  
 She shal be cleped his "wenche," or his "lemman,"  
 And God it woot, myn owene deeré brother, 221  
 Men leyn that oon as lowe as lith that oother.

Right so bitwixe a titleless tiraunt  
 And an outlawe, or a thief erraunt,  
 The same I seye, ther is no difference,— 225  
 To Alisaundré was toold this sentence,—  
 That for the tiraunt is of gretter myght  
 By force of meynnee, for to sleen doun right,  
 And brennen hous and hoom, and make al playn,  
 Lo, therfore is he cleped a "capitayn;" 230

207. *The wise Plato*, quoted  
 from Boethius, Bk. iii.  
 prose 12. Cp. General  
 Prologue, ll. 741, 742.

211. *boystous*, rough.

223. *titleless*, i.e. without good  
 claim to his throne.

And for the outlawe hath but smal meynce,  
 And may nat doon so greet an harm as he,  
 Ne brynge a contree to so greet mescheef,  
 Men clepen hym an "outlawe," or a "theef;"  
 But for I am a man noght textueel, 235  
 I wol noght tellé of textés never a deel;  
 I wol go to my tale as I bigan.

Whan Phebus wyf had sent for hir lemman,  
 Anon they wroghten al hire lust volage.

The whitè crowe that heeng ay in the cage 240  
 Biheeld hire werk and seyde never a word;  
 And whan that hoom was come Phebus, the lord,  
 This crowe sang "Cokkow! Cokkow! Cokkow!"

"What! bryd," quod Phebus, "what song  
 syngestow?"

Ne were thou wont so myrily to synge 245  
 That to myn herte it was a rejoysynge  
 To heere thy voys? Allas! what song is this?"

"By God!" quod he, "I syngé nat amys.  
 Phebus," quod he, "for al thy worthynesse,  
 For al thy beautee and thy gentillesse, 250  
 For al thy song and al thy mynstralcy,  
 For al thy waityng, bleréd is thyn eye  
 With oon of litel reputacioun,  
 Noght worth to thee as in comparisoun  
 The montance of a gnat, so moote I thryve! 255  
 For on thy bed thy wyf I saugh hym swyve."

What wol ye moore? The crowe anon hym tolde

235. *noght textueel*, H<sup>4</sup> *not  
 texted wel.*

239. *volage*, giddy.  
 255. *montance*, value.

By saddè tokenes, and by wordès bolde,  
 How that his wyf had doon hire lecherye,  
 Hym to greet shame and to greet vileynye, 260  
 And tolde hym ofte he saugh it with hise eyen.

This Phebus gan awayward for to wryen,  
 And thoughte his sorweful hertè brast atwo ;  
 His bowe he bente, and sette ther-inne a flo,  
 And in his ire his wyf thanne hath he slayn,— 265  
 This is theeffect, ther is namoore to sayn ;  
 For sorwe of which he brak his mynstralcie,  
 Bothe harpe, and lute, and gyterne, and sautrie,  
 And eek he brak hise arwes and hise bowe,  
 And after that thus spak he to the crowe : 270

“Traitous,” quod he, “with tonge of scorpioun  
 Thou hast me broght to my confusioun.  
 Allas ! that I was wroght ! why nere I deed ?  
 O deerè wyf ! O gemme of lustiheed !  
 That were to me so sad, and eek so trewe, 275  
 Now listow deed, with facè pale of hewe,  
 Ful gyltéles,—that dorste I swere, y-wys !  
 O rakel hand ! to doon so foule amys.  
 O trouble wit ! O irè, recchéles !  
 That unavyséd smyteth gyltéles ! 280  
 O wantrust ! ful of fals suspecioun,  
 Where was thy wit and thy discrecioun ?

258. *sadde*, earnest.262. *wryen*, turn.263. *And*, H<sup>4</sup> *Hym*.264. *flo*, dart.265. *his wyf*, etc., H<sup>4</sup> *he hath*  
*(hath he) his wyf i-slayn*.273. *wroght*, H *born*.276. *listow*, liest thou.277. *gylteles*, E<sup>4</sup> *gilltees*.278.  *rakel*, hasty.279. 280. *reccheles* . . . *gillteles*,  
*E recchelees* . . . *gilltes*.281. *wantrust*, distrustful.



O every man, be war of rakelnesse,  
 Ne trowe no thyng withouten strong witnesse.  
 Smyt nat to soone, er that ye witen why ; 285  
 And beeth avysed wel and sobrelly,  
 Er ye doon any execucioun  
 Upon youre iré for suspecioun !  
 Allas ! a thousand folk hath rakel ire  
 Fully fordoon, and broght hem in the mire ! 290  
 Allas ! for sorwe I wol myselfen slee."

And to the crowe, "O falsé theef !" seyde he,  
 "I wol thee quite anon thy falsé tale.  
 Thou songé whilom lyk a nyghtyngale ;  
 Now shaltow, falsé theef, thy song forgon, 295  
 And eek thy whité fetherés everichon ;  
 Ne nevere in al thy lif ne shaltou speke ;  
 Thus shal men on a traytour been awreke.  
 Thou, and thyn of-spryng, evere shul be blake,  
 Ne nevere sweeté noysé shul ye make, 300  
 But evere crie agayn tempest and rayn,  
 In tokenyngé that thurgh thee my wyf is slayn."  
 And to the crowe he stirte, and that anon,  
 And pulled hise whité fetherés everychon, 304  
 And made hym blak, and refte hym all his song,  
 And eek his speche, and out at dore hym slong,  
 Unto the devel, which I hym bitake !  
 And for this caas been allé crowés blake.

Lordynges, by this ensample I yow preye,

284. *strong*, H and Camb. *gret*.

291. *slee*, slay.

300. *noyse*, E *voys*.

302. *is*, H<sup>2</sup> *was*.

307. *bitake*, entrust to.

308. *caas*, hap ; H<sup>2</sup> *cause*.

Beth war, and taketh kepé what I seye ; 310  
 Ne telleth nevere no man in youré lyf  
 How that another man hath dight his wyf ;  
 He wol yow haten mortally, certeyn.  
 Daun Salomon, as wisé clerkés seyn,  
 Techeth a man to kepen his tonge weel ; 315  
 But as I seyde, I am noght textueel,  
 But nathélees, thus taughté me my dame :  
 " My sone, thenk on the crowe, on Goddés name ;  
 My sone, keepe wel thy tonge and keepe thy freend ;  
 A wikked tonge is worsé than a feend ; 320  
 My soné, from a feend men may hem blesse ;  
 My sone, God of his endelees goodnesse  
 Walléd a tonge with teeth and lippés eke,  
 For man sholde hym avysé what he speeke ;  
 My sone, ful ofté for to muché speche 325  
 Hath many a man been spilt, as clerkés teche,  
 Bút for litel speche avysély  
 Is no man shent, to speké generally.  
 My sone, thy tongé sholdestow restreyne  
 At allé tymes, but whan thou doost thy payne 330  
 To speke of God, in honour and preyere.  
 The firsté vertu, sone, if thou wolt leere,  
 Is to restreyne and kepé wel thy tonge ;  
 Thus lerné children whan that they been yonge.  
 My sone, of muchel spekyng yvele avysed, 335  
 Ther lassé spekyng hadde ynough suffised,  
 Comth muchel harm, thus was me toold and taught ;

310. *I seye*, H<sup>4</sup> *ye seye*.316. *textueel*, H<sup>4</sup> *texted (text) wel*.318. *ou*, H *in*, Heng.<sup>5</sup> *a*.

In muchel spechè synné wanteth naught.  
 Wostow wher-of a rakel tongé serveth?  
 Right as a swerd for-kutteth and for-kerveth 340  
 An arm atwo, my deeré sone, right so  
 A tongé kutteth freendshipe al atwo.  
 A jangler is to God abhomynable.  
 Reed Salomon, so wys and honourable,  
 Reed David in hise Psalmés, reek Senekke. 345  
 My sone, spek nat, but with thyn heed thou bekke;  
 Dissimule as thou were deef, if that thou heere  
 A jangler speke of perilous mateere.  
 The Flemyng seith, and lerne it if thee leste,  
 That 'litel janglyng causeth muchel rest.' 350  
 My sone, if thou no wikked word hast seyde,  
 Thee thar nat dredé for to be biwreyd;  
 But he that hath mysseyd, I dar wel sayn,  
 He may by no wey clepe his word agayn.  
 Thyng that is seyde is seyde, and forth it gooth, 355  
 Though hym repente, or be hym leef or looth.  
 He is his thral to whom that he hath sayde  
 A tale of which he is now yvele apayde.  
 My sone, be war, and be noon auctour newe  
 Of tidynges, wheither they been false or trewe; 360  
 Wher so thou come, amongés hye or lowe,  
 Kepe wel thy tonge, and thenk upon the crowe."

352. *thar*, need.354. *clepe*, call.356. *leef* or, H<sup>4</sup> *never so*.

## GROUP I

*Heere folweth the Prologe of the Persons Tale*

By that the Maunciple hadde his tale al ended  
The sonnè fro the south lyne was descended  
So lowè that he ne nas nat to my sighte  
Degreës nyne-and-twenty as in highte ;  
[Foure] of the klokke it was tho, as I gesse, 5  
For ellevene foot, or litel moore or lesse,  
My shadwe was at thilkè tyme, as there,  
Of swiche feet as my lengthè parted were  
In sixe feet equal of proporcioun.  
Ther-with the moonés exaltacioun, 10  
I meene *Libra*, alwey gan ascende

1. *the Maunciple*, according to the notes of time some other tales must have intervened, and *Maunciple* is only the guess of the copyists.
2. *was*, H<sup>4</sup> *is*.
5. *Foure*, MSS. *Ten*, which accords with neither line 4 nor line 72.
7. *as there*, i.e. in that latitude; H *of the yere*.
- 10, 11. *the moones exallacioun*, I *meene Libra*. It seems best to suppose with Tyrwhitt that *the moones* is a blunder for *Saturnes*, Taurus being the exaltation of the moon, and *Libra* of Saturn. H reads *In mena* for *I meene*. *In mene* (in the middle of) has been suggested as a possible reading.

As we were entryng at a thropés ende ;  
 For which our Hoost, as he was wont to gye,  
 As in this caas, oure joly compaignye,  
 Scyde in this wisé, "Lordynges everichoon, 15  
 Now lakketh us no talés mo than oon ;  
 Fulfilled is my sentence and my decree ;  
 I trowe that we han herd of ech degree.  
 Almost fulfild is al myn ordinaunce ;  
 I pray to God so geve hym right good chaunce 20  
 That telleth this tale to us lustily.

"Sire Preest," quod he, "artow a vicary,  
 Or arte a Person? sey sooth, by thy fey!  
 Be what thou be, ne breke thou nat oure pley,  
 For every man save thou hath toold his tale. 25  
 Unbokele, and shewe us what is in thy male ;  
 For trewely, me thynketh by thy cheere,  
 Thou sholdest knytte up wel a greet mateere.  
 Telle us a fable anon, for cökkés bones!"

This Persoune answerde al atones, 30  
 "Thou getest fable noon y-toold for me,  
 For Paul, that writeth unto Thymothee,  
 Repreveth hem that weyveth soothfastnesse,  
 And tellen fables, and swich wrecchednesse.  
 Why sholde I sowen draf out of my fest, 35  
 Whan I may sowen whete, if that me lest?

12. *thropes*, hamlet's.

13. *gye*, guide.

22. *vicary* . . . *Person*, like a rector the parson claimed the great tithes as well as the small; a vicar had to surrender them

to a monastery or layman.

24. *thou* (2), om. H<sup>4</sup>.

26. *male*, bag.

33. *weyveth*, forsakes.

35. *draf*, dregs.

For which I seye, if that yow list to heere  
 Moralitee and vertuous mateere,  
 And thanne that ye wol geve me audience,  
 I wol ful fayn, at Cristès reverence, 40  
 Do yow plesauncé leefful, as I kan ;  
 But, trusteth wel, I am a southren man,  
 I kan nat geesté '*rum, ram, ruf,*' by lettre ;  
 Ne, God woot, rym holde I but litel better ;  
 And therfore, if yow list,—I wol nat glose,— 45  
 I wol yow telle a myrie tale in prose,  
 To knytte up al this feeste, and make an ende ;  
 And Jhesu, for his gracé, wit me sende  
 To shewé yow the wey, in this viage,  
 Of thilké parfit, glorious pilgrymage, 50  
 That highte Jerusalem celestial ;  
 And if ye vouchésauf, anon I shal  
 Bigynne upon my tale, for whiche I preye  
 Telle youre avys. I kan no better seye.  
 "But nathélees this meditacioun 55  
 I putte it ay under correccioun  
 Of clerkés, for I am nat textueel.  
 I také but the sentencé, trusteth weel ;  
 Therfore I make a protestacioun  
 That I wol stondé to correccioun." 60  
 Upon this word we han assented soone,  
 For as us seméd, it was for to doone,

40. *ful*, om. E.41. *leefful*, lawful.43. *geeste*, etc., tell tales in alliterative metres like the northern poets.44. *rym*, rhyme.54. *avys*, advice.58. *the* (om. E) *sentence*, meaning as opposed to letter.

To enden in som vertuouſ sentence,  
 And for to geve hym ſpace and audience ;  
 And bede oure Hoost he ſholdè to hym ſeye 65  
 That allè we to telle his tale hym preye.

Oure Hoostè hadde the wordès for us alle :  
 "Sire Preest," quod he, "now fairè yow bifalle !  
 Sey what yow list, and we wol gladly hère ;"  
 And with that word, he ſeyde in this manere : 70  
 "Telleth," quod he, "youre meditacioun ;  
 But hasteth yow, the ſonnè wole adoun.  
 Beth fructuous, and that in litel ſpace,  
 And to do wel, God ſendè yow his grace."

## PARSON'S TALE

### *Heere bigynneth the Persouns Tale*

JER. VI. *State super vias, et videte, et interrogate de semitis antiquis, quæ sit via bona, et ambulate in ea; et inuenietis refrigerium animabus vestris.*

[75] Oure sweete Lord God of hevene, that no man wole perisse, but wole that we comen alle to the knoweleche of hym and the blissful lif that is perdur-

*Parson's Tale.* The treatise on the Deadly Sins and their cure which is wedged into this account of Penitence is taken from the *Somme de Vices et de l'ertus* of Frère Lorens, a thirteenth century writer. Chaucer's authorship of

these sections has been doubted, perhaps needlessly; but the sermon is unmercifully long.

*Jer. vi., v. 16.*

*semitis, E viis.*

75. *that no man wole perisse,*  
 who desires to destroy  
 no man.  
*perdurable, lasting.*

able, amonesteth us by the prophete Jeremie, and seith in this wyse: "Stondeth upon the weyes, and seeth, and axeth of olde pathes, that is to seyn of olde sentences, which is the goode wey, and walketh in that wey, and ye shal fynde refresshyng for youre soules."

Manye been the weyes espirituels that leden folk to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and to the regne of glorie; [80] of whiche weyes ther is a ful noble wey, and a covenable, which may nat fayle to man, ne to womman, that thurgh synne hath mysghoon fro the righte wey of Jerusalem celestial, and this wey is cleped penitence; of which man sholde gladly herkennen and enquire with al his herte to wyten what is penitence, and whennes it is cleped penitence, and in how manye maneres been the acciouns or werkynge of penitence, and how manye speces ther been of penitence, and whiche thynges apertenen and bihoven to penitence, and whiche thynges destourben penitence.

Seint Ambrose seith that penitence is the pleyntyng of man for gilt that he hath doon and namore to do any thyng for which hym oghte to pleyne; [85] and som doctour seith, "Penitence is the waymentyng of man that sorweth for his synne, and pyneth hym self for he hath mysdoon." Penitence with certeyne circumstances is verray repentance of a man that halt hym self in sorwe and oother peyne for hise gyltes;

76. *amonesteth*, warns.

77. *sentences*, maxims.

80. *covenable* (suitable), H<sup>6</sup> *ful covenable*.

*man*, E *no man*.

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81. *man* . . . *his*, H<sup>6</sup> *men*  
 . . . H<sup>2</sup> *here*.

85. *waymentyng*, lamenting.  
*oother peyne*, H *in woo*.



and for he shall be verray penitent, he shal first biwaylen the synnes that he hath doon and stidefastly purposen in his herte to have shrift of mouthe and to doon satisfaccioun, and nevere to doon thyng for which hym oghte moore biwayle or to compleyne, and continue in goode werkes, or elles his repentance may nat availle ; for, as seith Seint Ysidre, "He is a japer and a gabber and no verray repentant that eftsoone dooth thyng for which hym oghte repente." [90] Wepynge, and nat for to stynt to do synne, may nat availle ; but nathelees men shal hope that at every tyme that man falleth, be it never so ofte, that he may arise thurgh penitence if he have grace ; but certainly it is greet doute, for, as seith Seint Gregorie, unnethe ariseth he out of his synne that is charged with the charge of yvel usage ; and therfore repentant folk that stynte for to synne, and forlete synne er that synne forlete hem, hooly chirche holdeth hem siker of hire savacioun. And he that synneth and verrailly repenteth hym in his laste ende, hooly chirche yet hopeth his savacioun, by the grete mercy of oure Lord Jhesu Crist for his repentaunce ; but taak the siker wey.

[95] And now sith I have declared yow what thyng is penitence, now shul ye understonde that ther been thre acciouns of penitence. The firste accioun of penitence is that a man be baptized after that he hath

87. *shrift of mouthe*, verbal confession.

89. *Seint Ysidre*, St. Isidore.

90. *do*, om. E.  
*at every tyme*, E om. *at*.

92. *unnethe*, hardly.

92. *his*, om. E.

94. *ende*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

96. *acciouns of penitence*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

*that a man*, H<sup>4</sup> *that if a man*.

synned. Seint Augustyn seith, "But he be penytenant for his olde synful lyf, he may nat bigynne the newe clene lif;" for certes, if he be baptized withouten penitence of his olde gilt, he receyveth the mark of baptesme, but nat the grace, ne the remission of his synnes, til he have repentance verray. Another defaute is this, that men doon deedly synne after that they han recevyed baptesme. [100] The thridde defaute is that men fallen in venial synnes after hir baptesme fro day to day. Ther-of seith Seint Augustyn that penitence of goode and humble folk is the penitence of every day.

The speses of penitence been thre. That oon of hem is solempne, another is commune, and the thridde is privee. Thilke penance that is solempne is in two maneres; as to be put out of hooly chirche in Lente for slaughtre of children, and swich maner thyng. Another thyng is whan a man hath synned openly, of which synne the fame is openly spoken in the contree, and thanne hooly chirche by juggement destreyneth hym for to do open penaunce. [105] Commune penaunce is that preestes enjoynen men in certeyn caas, as for to goon peraventure naked in pilgrimages, or bare-foot. Pryvee penaunce is thilke that men doon alday for privee synnes, of whiche they shryve hem prively, and receyve privee penaunce.

104. *Another thyng*, H<sup>6</sup> om.  
*thyng*.

*destreyneth*, constrains.

105. *enjoynen men*, H<sup>6</sup> *enjoynen men communly*.  
*naked*, i. e. without upper garments.

Now shaltow understande what is bihovely and necessarie to verray perfit penitence. And this stant on thre thynges: Contricioun of herte, Confessioun of mouth, and Satisfaccioun; for which seith Seint John Crisostom, "Penitence destreyneth a man to accepte benygne every peyne that hym is enjoyned with contricioun of herte, and shrift of mouth, with satisfaccioun, and in werkynge of alle manere humylytee;" [110] and this is fruytful penitence agayn thre thynges in whiche we wratthe oure Lord Jhesu Crist. This is to seyn, by delit in thynkyng, by recchelesnesse in spekyng, and by wikked synful werkynge; and agayns this wikkede giltes is penitence that may be likned unto a tree.

The roote of this tree is contricioun, that hideth hym in the herte of hym that is verray repentaunt, right as the roote of a tree hydeth hym in the erthe. Of the roote of contricioun spryngeth a stalke, that bereth braunches and leves of confessioun, and fruyt of satisfaccioun. [115] For which Crist seith in his gospel, "Dooth digne fruyt of penitence;" for by this fruyt may men knowe this tree, and nat by the roote that is hyd in the herte of man, ne by the braunches, ne by the leves of confessioun; and therefore oure Lord Jhesu Crist seith thus, "By the fruyt of hem ye shul knowen hem." Of this roote eek spryngeth a seed of grace, the which seed is mooder of sikerness, and this seed is egre and hoot. The grace of this seed spryngeth of God

107. *is bihovely and*, H<sup>5</sup> *bihoveth and is*.

117. *of grace*, E *a grace*.  
*egre*, biting.

thurgh remembrance of the day of doome and on the peynes of helle. Of this matere seith Salomon, that in the drede of God man forleteth his synne. [120] The heete of this seed is the love of God, and the desiryng of the joye perdurable. This heete draweth the herte of a man to God, and dooth hym haten his synne; for soothly ther is no thyng that savoureth so wel to a child as the milk of his norice, ne no thyng moore abhomynable than thilke milk whan it is medled with oother mete. Right so the synful man that loveth his synne, hym semeth that it is to him moost sweete of any thyng; but fro that tyme that he loveth sadly oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and desireth the lif perdurable, ther nys to him no thyng moore abhomynable; [125] for soothly the lawe of God is the love of God. For which David the prophete seith, "I have loved thy lawe, and hated wikkednesse and hate; he that loveth God kepeth his lawe and his word." This tree saugh the prophete Daniel in spirit upon the avysoun of Nabugodonosor, whan he conseiled hym to do penitence. Penaunce is the tree of lyf to hem that it receyven, and he hath holdeth hym in verray penitence is blessed, after the sentence of Salomon.

In this penitence or contricioun man shal understonde foure thynges; that is to seyn, what is contricioun, and whiche been the causes that moeven a

122. *ne no thyng*, H<sup>6</sup> *ne no thyng is to him*.

124. *sadly*, constantly.

216. *in spirit upon the avysoun*

*of, E in the avysoun of the kyng.*

126. *Nabugodonosor*, Nebuchadnezzar.

man to contricioun, and how he sholde be contrit, and what contricioun availleth to the soule. Thanne is it thus that contricioun is the verray sorwe that a man receyveth in his herte for his synnes, with sad purpos to shryve hym and to do penaunce, and neveremoore to do synne; [130] and this sorwe shal been in this manere, as seith Seint Bernard; it shal been hevy and grevous, and ful sharpe and poynant in herte. First, for man hath agilt his Lord and his Creatour, and moore sharpe and poynaunt for he hath agilt hys Fader celestial, and yet moore sharpe and poynaunt for he hath wrathed and agilt hym that boghte hym, which with his precious blood hath delivered us fro the bondes of synne, and fro the crueltee of the devel, and fro the peynes of helle.

The causes that oghte moeve a man to contricioun been sexe. First, a man shal remembre hym of hise synnes; but looke he that thilke remembraunce ne be to hym no delit by no wey, but greet shame and sorwe for his gilt; for Job seith, synful men doon werkes worthy of confessioun. [135] And therefore seith Ezechie, "I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lyf in bitternesse of myn herte." And God seith in the Apocalipse, "Remembreth yow fro whennes that ye been falle;" for biforn that tyme that ye synned ye were the children of God, and lymes of the regne of God; but for youre synne ye been woxen thral and foul, and membres of the feend, hate of

aungels, sclaunde of hooly chirche, and foode of the false serpent, perpetueel matere of the fir of helle; and yet moore foul and abhomynable, for ye trespassen so ofte tyme as dooth the hound that retourneth to eten his spewyng; and yet be ye fouler for youre longe continuyng in synne and youre synful usage, for which ye be roten in youre synne as a beest in his dong. [140] Swiche manere of thoghtes maken a man to have shame of his synne and no delit, as God seith by the prophete Ezechiel, "Ye shal remembre yow of youre weyes and they shuln displese yow." Soothly synnes been the weyes that leden folk to helle.

The seconde cause that oghte make a man to have desdeyn of synne is this, that, as seith Seint Peter, "Who-so that dooth synne is thral of synne;" and synne put a man in greet thraldom, and therfore seith the prophete Ezechiel, "I wente sorweful in desdayn of my self;" and certes, wel oghte a man have desdayn of synne and withdrawe hym from that thraldom and vileynye. And lo, what seith Seneca in this matere? He seith thus: "Though I wiste that God—neither God ne man—ne sholde nevere knowe it, yet wolde I have desdayn for to do synne." [145] And the same Seneca also seith, "I am born to gretter thynges than to be thral to my body, or than for to maken of my body a thral;" ne a fouler thral may no man ne womman maken of his body than for to geven his body to synne. Al were it the fouleste cheryl, or

the fouleste womman that lyveth, and leest of value, yet is he thanne moore foule and moore in servitude. Evere fro the hyer degree that man falleth, the moore is he thral, and moore to God and to the world vile and abhomynable. O goode God! wel oghte man have desdayn of synne, sith that thurgh synne ther he was free now is he maked bonde; [150] and therfore seyth Seint Augustyn, "If thou hast desdayn of thy servant, if he agilte, or synne, have thou thanne desdayn that thou thyself sholdest do synne; take reward of thy value, that thou ne be to foul to thyself." Allas! wel oghthen they thanne have desdayn to been servauntz and thralles to synne, and soore been ashamed of hem self, that God of his endelees goodnesse hath set hem in heigh estaat, or geven hem wit, strengthe of body, heele, beautee, prosperitee, and boghte hem fro the deeth with his herte blood, that they so unkyndely agayns his gentillesse quiten hym so vileynsly to slaughtre of hir owene soules. [155] O goode God! ye wommen that been of so greet beautee, remembreth yow of the proverbe of Salomon, he seith, "Liketh a fair womman that is a fool of hire body lyk to a ryng of gold that were in the groyn of a soughe, for right as a soughe wroteth in everich ordure, so wroteth hire beautee in the stynkyng ordure of synne."

The thridde cause that oghte moeve a man to contricioun is drede of the day of doome and of the

148. *vile and*, om. E.

151. *reward*, regard.

156. *soughe*, sow.

157. *wroteth*, digs with the snout.

horrible peynes of helle; for as Seint Jerome seith, "At every tyme that me remembreth of the day of doome, I quake, [160] for whan I ete, or drynke, or what so that I do, evere semeth me that the trompe sowneth in myn ere, 'Riseth up, ye that been dede, and cometh to the juggement.'" O goode God! muchel oghte a man to drede swich a juggement, ther as we shullen been alle, as Seint Poul seith, biforn the seete of oure Lord Jhesu Crist, wher as he shal make a general congregacioun, wher as no man may been absent, for certes there availleth noon essoyne, ne excusacioun. [165] And nat oonly that oure defautes shullen be jugged, but eek that alle oure werkes shullen openly be knowe. And as seith Seint Bernard, "Ther ne shal no pledyngge availle ne sleighte, we shullen geven rekenyngge of everich ydel word, ther shul we han a juge that may nat been deceyved ne corrupt." And why? for certes alle oure thoghtes been discovered as to hym; ne for preyere, ne for meede, he shal nat been corrupt. And therfore seith Salomon, "The wratthe of God wol nat be corrupte;" and therefore saith Salomon, "The wrecche ne wol nat spare no wight for preyere ne for gifte;" and therfore, at the day of doom ther nys noon hope to escape.

Wherfore, as seith Seint Anselm, "Ful greet angwyssh shul the synful folk have at that tyme.

164. *essoyne*, excuse for non-appearance.

168. *wol nat be . . . the wrecche*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.  
*wrecche*, vengeance.



[170] Ther shal the stierne and wrothe juge sitte above, and under hym the horrible put of helle open to destroyen hym that moot biknowen hise synnes, whiche synnes openly been shewed biforn God and biforn every creature ; and in the left syde mo develes than herte may bithynke, for to harye and drawe the synful soules to the peyne of helle ; and withinne the hertes of folk shal be the bitynge conscience, and withoute forth shal be the world al brennyng." Whider shal thanne the wrecched synful man flee to hiden hym ? Certes, he may nat hyden hym,—he moste come forth and shewen hym ; for certes, as seith Seint Jerome, " The erthe shal casten hym out of hym, and the see also, and the eyr also, that shal be ful of thonder clappes and lightnynges."

[175] Now soothly, who so wel remembreth hym of thise thynges, I gesse that his synne shal nat turne hym to delit, but to greet sorwe, for drede of the peyne of helle. And therfore seith Job to God, " Suffre, Lord, that I may awhile biwaille, and wepe, er I go withoute returnyng to the derke lond covered with the derknesse of deeth, to the lond of mysese and of derknesse, where as is the shadwe of deeth, where as ther is noon ordre or ordinaunce, but grisly drede that evere shal laste." Loo, heere may ye seen that Job preyde respit a while to biwepe and waille his trespass, for soothly oon day of respit is bettre than al

170. *put*, *pit*.

*moot*, E *noot*.

*biknowen*, confess.

175. *to delit*, E<sup>2</sup> *in delit*,  
Camb.<sup>4</sup> *into delit*.

177. *mysese*, discomfort.

178. *oon day*, E *a day*.

the tresor of this world ; and forasmuche as a man may acquiten hymself biforn God by penitence in this world, and nat by tresor, therfore sholde he preye to God to geve hym respit a while to biwepe and bi-wailen his trespass ; [180] for certes, al the sorwe that a man myghte make fro the bigynnyng of the world nys but a litel thyng at regard of the sorwe of helle.

The cause why that Job clepeth helle the lond of derknesse. Understondeth that he clepeth it londe or erthe, for it is stable and nevere shal faille ; dirk, for he that is in helle hath defaute of light material, for certes, the derke light that shal come out of the fyr that evere shal brenne shal turne hym al to peyne that is in helle, for it sheweth hym to the horrible develes that hym tormenten ; covered with the derknesse of deeth ; that is to seyn, that he that is in helle shal have defaute of the sighte of God ; for certes, the sighte of God is the lyf perdurable.

[185] The derknesse of deeth been the synnes that the wrecched man hath doon, whiche that destourben hym to see the face of God, right as dooth a derk clowde bitwixe us and the sonne. Lond of misese, by-cause that ther been thre maneres of defautes agayn thre thynges that folk of this world han in this present lyf ; that is to seyn, honours, delices, and riches. Agayns honour have they in helle shame and confusioun ; for wel ye woot that men clepen honour the reverence that man doth to man ; but in helle is noon honour ne reverence, for certes, namoore reverence

178. *this world*, E *the world*.

182. *or erthe*, E *of erthe*.

shal be doon there to a kyng than to a knave. For which God seith by the prophete Jeremye, "Thilke folk that me despisen shul been in despit." [190] Honour is eek cleped greet lordshipe. Ther, shal no wight serven oother but of harm and torment. Honour is eek cleped greet dignytee and heighnesse, but in helle shul they been al fortroden of develes. And God seith, "The horrible develes shulle goon and comen upon the hevedes of the dampned folk;" and this is forasmuche as the hyer that they were in this present lyf, the moore shulle they been abated and defouled in helle.

Agayns the riches of this world shul they han myse of poverte; and this poverte shal been in foure thynges. In defaute of tresor, of which that David seith, "The riche folk that embraceden and oneden al hire herte to tresor of this world, shul slepe in the slepyng of deeth, and no thyng ne shal they fynden in hir handes of al hir tresor." And mooreover the myseyse of helle shal been in defaute of mete and drinke, [195] for God seith thus by Moyses, "They shul been wasted with hunger, and the briddes of helle shul devouren hem with the bitter deeth, and the galle of the dragon shal been hire drynke, and the venym of the dragon hire morsels." And forther-over hire myseyse shal been in defaute of clothyng, for they shulle be naked in body, as of clothyng, save

190. *Ther shal . . . dignytee,*  
om. E.

191. *hevedes*, heads.

193. *oneden*, devoted entirely.

195. *the bitter deeth*, H *bitter teeth*.

the fyr in which they brenne, and othere filthes ; and naked shul they been of soule, as of alle manere vertues which that is the clothyng of the soule. Where been thanne the gaye robes, and the softe shetes, and the smale shertes ? Loo, what seith God of hem by the prophete Ysaye ? That under hem shul been strawed motthes, and hire covertures shulle been of wormes of helle. And forther-over hir myseyse shal been in defaute of freendes, for he nys nat poure that hath goode freendes ; but there is no frend ; [200] for neither God, ne no creature, shal been freend to hem ; and everich of hem shal haten oother with deedly hate. The sones and the doghtren shullen rebellen agayns fader and mooder, and kynrede agayns kynrede, and chiden and despisen everich of hem oother bothe day and nyght, as God seith by the prophete Michias. And the lovyng children that whilom loveden so fleshly everich oother wolden everich of hem eten oother if they myghte ; for how sholden they love togidre in the peyne of helle, whan they hated ech of hem oother in the prosperitee of this lyf ? For truste wel, hir fleshly love was deedly hate, as seith the prophete David, "Whoso that loveth wikkednesse he hateth his soule ;" [205] and whoso hateth his owene soule, certes, he may love noon oother wight in no manere ; and therfore in helle is no solas, ne no freendshipe, but evere the moore fleshly kynredes that been in helle, the moore

197. *softe* . . . *smale*, E transposes the epithets.

203. *togidre*, H<sup>6</sup> *hem togidre*.

cursynges, the more chidynges, and the moore deedly hate ther is among hem.

And forther-over they shul have defaute of alle manere delices; for certes delices been after the appetites of the five wittes, as sighte, herynge, smell-yng, savorynge, [210] and touchyng: but in helle hir sighte shal be ful of derknesse and of smoke, and therfore ful of teeres, and hir herynge ful of wayment-yng and of gryntyng of teeth, as seith Jhesu Crist. Hir nose-thirles shullen be ful of stynkyng stynk; and, as seith Ysaye the prophete, hir savoryng shal be ful of bitter galle; and touchyng of al hir body y-covered with fir that nevere shal quenche and with wormes that nevere shul dyen, as God seith by the mouth of Ysaye. And forasmuch as they shul nat wene that they may dyen for peyne, and by hir deeth flee fro peyne, that may they understonden by the word of Job, that seith, "Ther as is the shadwe of deeth." Certes a shadwe hath the liknesse of the thyng of which it is shadwe, but shadwe is nat the same thyng of which it is shadwe. Right so fareth the peyne of helle; it is lyk deeth for the horrible angwissh; and why? For it peyneth hem evere as though they sholde dye anon, but certes, they shal nat dye, for as seith Seint Gregorie, "To wrecche caytyves shal be deeth withoute deeth, and ende withouten ende, and defaute withoute failyng, [215] for hir deeth shal alwey lyven and hir ende shal everemo bigynne, and hir defaute shal nat faille;" and therfore seith

Seint John the Evaungelist, "They shullen folwe deeth and they shul nat fynde hym, and they shul desiren to dye and deeth shal flee fro hem."

And eek Job seith that in helle is noon ordre of rule, and al be it so that God hath creat alle thynges in right ordre and no thyng withouten ordre, but alle thynges been ordeyned and nombred; yet nathelees, they that been dampned been no thyng in the ordre, ne holden noon ordre, for the erthe ne shal bere hem no fruyt, [220] for, as the prophete David seith, "God shal destroe the fruyt of the erthe as fro hem, ne water ne shal geve hem no moisture, ne the eyr no refresshyng, ne fyr no light." For as seith Seint Basile, "The brennyng of the fyr of this world shal God geven in helle to hem that been dampned, but the light and the cleernesse shal be geven in hevene to hise children, right as the goode man geveth flesh to hise children and bones to his houndes." And for they shullen have noon hope to escape, seith Seint Job atte laste, that ther shal horroure and grisly drede dwellen withouten ende.

Horroure is alwey drede of harm that is to come, and this drede shal evere dwelle in the hertes of hem that been dampned; and therfore han they lorn al hire hope for sevene causes. [225] First, for God that is hir juge shal be withouten mercy to hem, and they may nat plese hym ne noon of hise halwes; ne they ne may geve no thyng for hir raunsoun; ne they have no voys to speke to hym; ne they may nat fle fro

peyne; ne they have no goodnesse in hem that they mowe shewe to delivere hem fro peyne. And therefore seith Salomon, "The wikked man dyeth, and whan he is deed he shal have noon hope to escape fro peyne." Whoso thanne wolde wel understande these peynes and bithynke hym weel that he hath deserved thilke peynes for his synnes, certes, he sholde have moore talent to siken and to wepe, than for to syngen and to pleye, for as that seith Salomon, "Whoso that hadde the science to know the peynes that been establissed and ordeyned for synne, he wolde make sorwe." [230] Thilke science, as seith Seint Augustyn, maketh a man to waymenten in his herte.

The fourthe point that oghte maken a man to have contricioun is the sorweful remembraunce of the good that he hath left to doon heere in erthe, and eek the good that he hath lorn. Soothly, the goode werkes that he hath [lorn], outhur they been the goode werkes that he hath wroght er he fel into deedly synne, or elles the goode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in synne. Soothly, the goode werkes that he dide biforn that he fil in synne been al mortefied and astoned, and dulled, by the ofte synnyng. The othere goode werkes that he wroghte while he lay in deedly synne, thei been outrely dede as to the lyf perdurable in hevene.

228. *these peynes*, E. *the peynes*.

*talent*, desire.

*siken*, sigh.

231. *left to doon*, left undone; Camb.<sup>4</sup> *lost to don*.

232. [*lorn*], EH<sup>3</sup> *left*, Camb.<sup>4</sup> *lost*.

[235] Thanne thilke goode werkes that been mortified by ofte synnyng, whiche goode werkes he dide whil he was in charitee, ne mowe nevere quyken agayn withouten verray penitence; and ther-of seith God by the mouth of Ezechiel, "That if the rightful man returne agayn from his rightwisnesse and werke wikkednesse, shal he lyve? Nay, for alle the goode werkes that he hath wrought ne shul nevere been in remembrance, for he shal dyen in his synne." And upon thilke chapitre seith Seint Gregorie thus: "That we shulle understonde this principally, that whan we doon deedly synne it is for noght thanne to rehercen or drawn into memorie the goode werkes that we han wrought biforn;" [240] for certes, in the werkynge of the deedly synne ther is no trust to no good werk that we han doon biforn, that is for to seyn, as for to have therby the lyf perdurable in hevene; but nathelees, the goode werkes quyken agayn and comen agayn and helpen and availlen to have the lyf perdurable in hevene whan we han contricioun. But soothly, the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in deedly synne, forasmuch as they were doon in deedly synne, they may nevere quyke agayn; for certes, thyng that nevere hadde lyf may nevere quykene; and nathelees, al be it that they ne availe noght to han the lyf perdurable, yet availlen they to abregge of the peyne of helle, or elles to geten temporal richesse, or elles that God wole the rather enlumyne and lightne the herte of the synful man to

239. *it is for noght*, it is useless.



have repentaunce. [245] And eek they availen for to usen a man to doon goode werkes that the feend have the lasse power of his soule. And thus the curteis Lord Jhesu Crist wole that no good werk be lost, for in somewhat it shal availle. But, forasmuche as the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in good lyf been al mortefied by synne folwyng, and eek sith that alle the goode werkes that men doon whil they been in deedly synne been outrely dede, for to have the lyf perdurable, wel may that man that no good werk ne dooth synge thilke newe Frenshe song, "*Jay tout perdu—mon temps et mon labour.*"

For certes synne bireveth a man bothe goodnesse of nature and eek the goodnesse of grace; [250] for soothly, the grace of the Hooly Goost fareth lyk fyr that may nat been ydel, for fyr fayleth anoon as it forleteth his wirkyng; and right so grace fayleth anoon as it forleteth his werkyng. Then leseth the synful man the goodnesse of glorie that oonly is bihight to goode men that labouren and werken. Wel may he be sory thanne that oweth al his lif to God, as longe as he hath lyved and eek as longe as he shal lyve, that no goodnesse ne hath to paye with his dette to God, to whom he oweth al his lyf; for, trust wel, he shal geven acountes, as seith Seint Bernard, of alle the goodes that han be geven hym in this present lyf, and how he hath hem despended; noght so muche that ther shal nat perisse an heer of

248. *thilke newe Frenshe song*, quoted again in the *Fortune*, l. 7.

252. *bihight*, promised.

his heed, ne a moment of an houre ne shal nat perisse of his tyme, that he ne shal geve of it a rekenyng.

[255] The fifthe thyng that oghte moeve a man to contricioun is remembrance of the passioun that oure Lord Jhesu Crist suffred for oure synnes, for, as seith Seint Bernard, "Whil that I lyve I shal have remembrance of the travailles that oure Lord Crist suffred in prechyng, his werynesse in travaill yng, hise temptaciouns whan he fasted, hise longe wakynges whan he preyde, hise teeres whan that he weepe for pitee of good peple, the wo and the shame and the filthe that men seyden to hym, of the foule spitting that men spitte in his face, of the buffettes that men gaven hym, of the foule mowes and of the repreves that men to hym seyden, of the nayles with whiche he was nayled to the croys, and of al the remenaunt of his passioun that he suffred for my synnes and no thyng for his gilt."

[260] And ye shul understonde that in mannes synne is every manere of ordre or ordinaunce turned up-so-down. For it is sooth that God and resoun and sensualitee and the body of man been ordeyned that everich of these foure thynges sholde have lordshipe over that oother; as thus: God sholde have lordshipe over resoun, and resoun over sensualitee, and sensualitee over the body of man; but soothly, whan man synneth al this ordre or ordinaunce is turned up-so-down. And therfore thanne, forasmuche as the resoun of man ne wol nat be subget ne obeisant

258. *mowes*, grimaces.

261. *thynges*, om. H.

to God, that is his lord by right, therfore leseth it the lordshipe that it sholde have over sensualitee, and eek over the body of man. [265] And why? For sensualitee rebelleth thanne agayns resoun, and by that wey leseth resoun the lordshipe over sensualitee and over the body, for, right as resoun is rebel to God, right so is bothe sensualitee rebel to resoun and the body also.

And certes, this disordinaunce and this rebelloun oure Lord Jhesu Crist aboghte upon his precious body ful deere; and herkneth in which wise. For as muche thanne as resoun is rebel to God, therfore is man worthy to have sorwe and to be deed. This suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man, after that he hadde be bitrayned of his disciple, and distreyned and bounde, so that his blood brast out at every nayl of hise handes, as seith Seint Augustyn. [270] And forther-over for as muchel as resoun of man ne wol nat daunte sensualitee whan it may, therfore is man worthy to have shame, and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man whan they spetten in his visage. And forther-over for as muchel thanne as the caytyf body of man is rebel bothe to resoun and to sensualitee, therfore is it worthy the deeth, and this suffred oure Lord Jhesu Crist for man upon the croys where as ther was no part of his body free withouten greet payne and bitter passioun.

And al this suffred Jhesu Crist that nevere forfeled, and therfore resonably may be said of Jhesu in this

267. *aboghte*, atoned for.

269. *distreyned*, compelled.

273. *and therefore . . . manere*,  
om. E<sup>2</sup>.

manere: "To muchel am I peyned for the thynges that I nevere deserved, and to muche defouled for shendshipe that man is worthy to have." And therfore may the synful man wel seye, as seith Seint Bernard, "Acursed be the bitternesse of my synne, for which ther moste be suffred so muchel bitternesse;" [275] for certes, after the diverse discordaunces of oure wikkednesses was the passioun of Jhesu Crist ordeyned in diverse thynges; as thus; certes, synful mannes soule is bitraysed of the devel by coveitise of temporeel prosperitee, and scorned by deceite whan he cheseth fleshly delices, and yet is it tormented by inpacience of adversitee, and by-spit by servage and subjeccioun of synne, and atte laste it is slayn fynally. For this disordinaunce of synful man was Jhesu Crist first bitraysed, and after that he was bounde that cam for to unbynden us of synne and of peyne. Thanne was he by-scorned that oonly sholde han been honoured in alle thynges and of alle thynges. Thanne was his visage, that oghte be desired to be seyn of al mankynde, in which visage aungels desiren to looke, vileynsly bispet; [280] thanne was he scourged that no thyng hadde agilt; and finally thanne was he crucified and slayn. Thanne was acompliced the word of Ysaye, "He was wounded for oure mysdedes and defouled by oure felonies." Now, sith that Jhesu Crist took upon

273. *shendshipe*, ignominy.276. *by-spit*, E *dispeir*.277. *first*, om. E.*of peyne*, E *peyne*.278. *han been*, H<sup>5</sup> *be*.281. *He*, E *that seith that he*.*by*, E *for*.

hymself the peyne of alle oure wikkednesses, muchel oghte synful man wepen and biwayle that for hise synnes Goddes sone of hevene sholde al this peyne endure.

The sixte thyng that oghte moeve a man to contricioun is the hope of thre thynges ; that is to seyn, forgifnesse of synne, and the gifte of grace wel for to do, and the glorie of hevene, with which God shal gerdone a man for hise goode dedes.

And, for as muche as Jhesu Crist geveth us thise giftes of his largesse, and of his sovereyn bountee, therfore is he cleped *Jhesus Nazarenus, rex Judaeorum*. [285] *Jhesus* is to seyn saveour, or salvacioun, on whom men shul hope to have forgifnesse of synnes, which that is proprely salvacioun of synnes ; and therfore seyde the aungel to Joseph, "Thou shalt clepen his name Jhesus that shal saven his peple of hir synnes." And heer-of seith Seint Peter, "Ther is noon oother name under hevene that is geve to any man by which a man may be saved," but oonly Jhesus. *Nazarenus* is as muche for to seye as florisshyng, in which a man shal hope that he that geveth hym remissioun of synnes shal geve hym eek grace wel for to do, for in the flour is hope of fruyt in tyme comynge, and in forgifnesse of synnes, hope of grace wel for to do. "I was atte dore of thyn herte," seith Jhesus, "and cleped for to entre ; he that openeth to me shal have forgifnesse of synne ; [290] I wol entre into hym by my grace and soupe with hym (by the goode

werkes that he shal doon, whiche werkes been the foode of God), and he shal soupe with me" (by the grete joye that I shal geven hym).

Thus shal man hope for hise werkes of penaunce that God shal geven hym his regne, as he bihooteth hym in the gospel.

Now shal a man understonde in which manere shal been his contricioun. I seye that it shal been universal and total. This is to seyn, a man shal be verray repentaunt for alle hise synnes that he hath doon in delit of his thought, for delit is ful perilous. For ther been two manere of consentynges; that oon of hem is cleped consentynge of affecciou, whan a man is moeved to do synne, and deliteth hym longe for to thynke on that synne, and his resoun aperceyveth it wel that it is synne agayns the lawe of God, and yet his resoun refreyneth nat his foul delit or talent, though he se wel apertly that it is agayns the reverence of God; although his resoun ne consente noght to doon that synne in dede, [295] yet seyn somme doctours that swich delit that dwelleth longe it is ful perilous, al be it nevere so lite. And also a man sholde sorwe namely, for al that evere he hath desired agayn the lawe of God with perfit consentynge of his resoun, for ther-of is no doute that it is deedly synne in consentynge; for certes, ther is no deedly synne that it nas first in mannes thought, and after that in his delit and so forth into consentynge, and

291. *bihooteth*, promises.

294. *talent*, desire.

294. *apertly*, clearly.

295. *lite*, little.

into dede. Wherfore, I seye that many men ne repenten hem nevere of swiche thoghtes and delites, ne nevere shryven hem of it, but oonly of the dede of grete synnes outward; wherfore, I seye that swiche wikked delites and wikked thoghtes been subtile bigileres of hem that shullen be dampned.

[300] Moore-over, man oghte to sorwe for hise wikkede wordes, as wel as for hise wikkede dedes; for, certes, the repentaunce of a synguler synne, and nat repente of alle hise othere synnes, or elles repenten hym of alle hise othere synnes and nat of a synguler synne, may nat availle. For certes, God Almyghty is al good, and therfore he forgeveth al, or elles right noght. And heer-of seith Seint Augustyn, I wot certeynly that God is enemy to everich synnere, and how thanne he that observeth o synne, shal he have forgifnesse of the remenaunt of hise othere synnes? Nay.

[305] And forther-over contricioun sholde be wonder sorweful and angwissous, and therfore geveth hym God pleynly his mercy, and therfore "whan my soule was angwissous with-inne me, I hadde remembrance of God, that my preyere myghte come to hym." Forther-over contricioun moste be continueel, and that man have stedefast purpos to shriven hym, and for to amenden hym of his lyf; for, soothly, whil contricioun lasteth man may evere have hope of forgifnesse, and of this comth hate of synne, that destroyeth synne bothe in him-self and eek in oother folk, at his

300. *synguler*, particular.

302. *I wot certeynly*, om. E.

power ; for which seith David, "Ye that loven God, hateth wikkednesse," for, trusteth wel, to love God is for to love that he loveth and hate that he hateth.

The laste thyng that man shal understonde in contricioun is this, "Wher-of awayleth contricioun?" I seye that som tyme contricioun delivereth a man fro synne ; of which that David seith, "I seye," quod David, that is to seyn, "I purposed fermely to shryve me, and thow, Lord, relesedest my synne." [310] And right so as contricioun availleth noght withouten sad purpos of shrifte, if man have oportunitee, right so litel worth is shrifte or satisfaccioun withouten contricioun. And moore-over contricioun destroyeth the prisoun of helle, and maketh wayk and fieble alle the strengthes of the develes, and restoreth the giftes of the Hooly Goost and of alle goode vertues ; and it clenseth the soule of synne and delivereth the soule fro the payne of helle, and fro the compaignye of the devel, and fro the servage of synne, and restoreth it to alle goodes espiituels, and to the compaignye and communyon of hooly chirche.

And forther-over it maketh hym that whilom was sone of ire to be sone of grace, and alle thise thynges been preved by hooly writ, and therfore he that wolde sette his entente to thise thynges, he were ful wys, for, soothly, he ne sholde nat thanne in al his lyf have corage to synne, but geven his body and al his herte to the service of Jhesu Crist, and ther-of doon hym

312. *alle the strengthes*, H<sup>5</sup>  
om. *alle*.

312. *goode vertues*, H<sup>3</sup> om.  
*goode*.



hommage ; [315] for soothly oure sweete Lord Jhesu Crist hath spared us so debonairly in our folies, that if he ne hadde pitee of mannes soule a sory song we myghten alle synge.

*Explicit prima pars penitentie. Et sequitur secunda pars eiusdem*

The seconde partie of penitence is confessioun that is signe of contricioun. Now shul ye understonde what is confessioun, and wheither it oghte nedes be doon or noon, and whiche thynges been covenable to verray confessioun.

First shaltow understonde that confessioun is verray shewyng of synnes to the preest ; this is to seyn "verray," for he moste confessen hym of alle the condiciouns that bilongen to his synne, as ferforth as he kan ; [320] al moot be seyde and no thyng excused, ne hyd, ne for-wrapped, and noght avaunte thee of thy goode werkes. And forther-over it is necessarie to understonde whennes that synnes spryngen, and how they encreessen, and whiche they been.

Of the spryngyng of synnes seith Seint Paul in this wise, that "Right as by a man synne entred first into this world, and thurgh that synne deeth ; right so thilke deeth entred into alle men that synneden ;" and this man was Adam, by whom synne entred into this world whan he brak the comaundementz of God. And therefore, he that first was so myghty that he

315. *soothly*, H<sup>4</sup> *certes*.

320. *thee of thy*, H<sup>6</sup> *him of his*.

sholde nat have dyed, bicam swich oon that he moste nedes dye wheither he wolde or noon, and al his progenye in this world that in thilke man synneden.

[325] Looke, that in thestaat of innocence, whan Adam and Eve naked weren in Paradys and no thyng ne hadden shame of hir nakednesse, how that the serpent, that was moost wily of alle othere beestes that God hadde maked, seyde to the womman, "Why comaunded God to yow ye sholde nat eten of every tree in Paradys?" The womman answerde, "Of the fruyt," quod she, "of the trees in Paradys we feden us, but soothly, of the fruyt of the tree that is in the myddel of Paradys God forbad us for to ete, and nat touchen it, lest peraventure we sholde dyen." The serpent seyde to the womman, "Nay, nay, ye shul nat dyen of deeth, for sothe, God woot that what day that ye eten ther-of youre eyen shul opene and ye shul been as goddes, knowynge good and harm."

The womman thanne saugh that the tree was good to feedyng, and fair to the eyen, and delitable to the sighte. She took of the fruyt of the tree, and eet it, and gaf to hire housbonde, and he eet, and anoon the eyen of hem bothe openeden; [330] and whan that they knewe that they were naked they sowed of fige leves a maner of breches, to hiden hire membres.

There may ye seen that deedly synne hath first suggestioun of the feend, as sheweth heere by the

324. *progenye in*, H<sup>5</sup> *progenye that is in*.

328. *dyen*, H *drede*.

329. *thanne*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

330. *a maner*, H *in maner*.

naddre, and afterward the delit of the flessch, as sheweth heere by Eve, and after that the consentynge of resoun, as sheweth heere by Adam. For trust wel, though so were that the feend tempted Eve, that is to seyn the flessch, and the flessch hadde delit in the beautee of the fruyt defended, yet certes til that resoun, that is to seyn Adam, consented to the etynge of the fruyt, yet stood he in thestaat of innocence. Of thilke Adam tooke we thilke synne original, for of hym flesschly descended be we alle, and engendred of vile and corrupt mateere; and whan the soule is put in oure body, right anon is contract original synne, and that that was erst but oonly peyne of concupiscence is afterward both peyne and synne; [335] and therefore be we alle born sones of wratthe and of dampnacioun perdurable, if it nere baptesme that we receyven, which bynymeth us the culpe. But for sothe the peyne dwelleth with us as to temptacioun, which peyne highte concupiscence. And this concupiscence whan it is wrongfully disposed or ordeyned in man it maketh hym coveite by coveitise of flessch, flesschly synne by sighte of hise eyen as to erthely thynges, and eek coveitise of hynesse by pride of herte.

Now, as for to speken of the firste coveitise, that is concupiscence after the lawe of oure membres that weren lawefulliche y-maked and by rightful juggement

331. *naddre*, serpent.

332. *Eve*, H<sup>5</sup> *oon*.  
*defended*, forbidden.

335. *bynymeth* (E *bynyneth*),  
takes away from.

335. *culpe*, blame.

336. *And this concupiscence*,  
om. E.

*eek*, om. E.

of God. I seye, forasmuche as man is nat obeisaunt to God, that is his Lord, therfore is the flessch to hym disobeisaunt thurgh concupiscence, which yet is cleped norrissynge of synne, and occasion of synne. Therfore al the while that a man hath in hym the peyne of concupiscence it is impossible but he be tempted somtime and moeved in his flessch to synne, [340] and this thyng may nat faille as longe as he lyveth. It may wel wexe fieble and faille by vertu of baptesme, and by the grace of God thurgh penitence, but fully ne shal it nevere quenche, that he ne shal som tyme be moeved in hymself, but if he were al refreyded by siknesse, or by malefice of sorcerie, or colde drynkes. For lo, what seith Seint Paul, "The flessch coveiteth agayn the spirit, and the spirit agayn the flessch; they been so contrarie and so stryven that a man may nat alwey dóon as he wolde." The same Seint Paul after his grete penaunce in water and in lond; in water by nyght and by day, in greet peril and in greet peyne, in lond, in famyne, in thirst, in coold, and cloothlees, and ones stoned almoost to the deeth, yet seyde he, "Allas! I caytyf man, who shal delivere me fro the prisoun of my caytyf body?" [345] And Seint Jerome, whan he longe tyme hadde woned in desert, where as he hadde no compaignye but of wilde beestes, where as he ne hadde no mete but herbes, and water to his drynke, ne no bed but the naked erthe, for which his flessch was blak as an Ethiopeen. for heete, and ny destroyed for coold, yet seyde he that the brennynge

341. *refreyded*, frozen.345. *woned*, lived.

of lecherie boyled in al his body; wherfore, I woot wel sykerly, that they been deceyved that seyn that they ne be nat tempted in hir body. Witnesse on Seint Jame the Apostel, that seith that every wight is tempted in his owene concupiscence, that is to seyn, that everich of us hath matere and occasioun to be tempted of the norissynge of synne that is in his body. And therfore seith Seint John the evaungelist, "If that we seyn that we beth withoute synne, we deceyve us selve, and trouthe is nat in us."

[350] Now shal ye understonde in what manere that synne wexeth and encreesseth in man. The firste thyng is thilke norissynge of synne of which I spak biforn, thilke fleshly concupiscence; and after that comth the subjeccioun of the devel, this is to seyn the develes bely, with which he bloweth in man the fir of fleshly concupiscence; and after that a man bithynketh hym wheither he wol doon, or no, thilke thing to which he is tempted. And thanne, if that a man withstonde and weyve the firste entisyng of his flesh, and of the feend, thanne is it no synne, and if it so be that he do nat so thanne feeleth he anon a flambe of delit, and thanne is it good to be war and kepen hym wel, or elles he wol falle anon into consentynge of synne, and thanne wol he do it if he may have tyme and place. [355] And of this matere seith Moyses, by the devel, in this manere: The feend

350. *wexeth and*, E *wexeth or*.

353. *weyve*, forsake.

355. *seith Moyses*, not in the Bible.  
*by the devel*, concerning the  
devil.

seith, "I wole chace and pursue the man by wikked suggestioun, and I wole hente hym by moevynge and stiryng of synne; I wol departe my prise, or my praye, by deliberacioun, and my lust shal been accompliced in delit; I wol drawe my swerd in consentynge,"—for certes, right as a swerd departeth a thyng in two peces, right so consentynge departeth God fro man,—  
"and thanne wol I sleen hym with myn hand in dede of synne;" thus seith the feend; for certes, thanne is a man al deed in soule. And thus is synne accompliced by temptacioun, by delit, and by consentynge, and thanne is the synne cleped actueel.

Forsothe synne is in two maneres, outhur it is venial, or deedly synne. Soothly, whan man loveth any creature moore than Jhesu Crist oure Creatour, thanne is it deedly synne. And venial synne is it, if man love Jhesu Crist lasse than hym oughte. Forsothe the dede of this venial synne is ful perilous, for it amenuseth the love that men sholde han to God moore and moore. [360] And therfore if a man charge hymself with manye swiche venial synnes, certes, but if so be that he som tyme discharge hym of hem by shrifte, they mowe ful lightly amenuse in hym al the love that he hath to Jhesu Crist; and in this wise skippeth venial into deedly synne, for certes, the moore that a man chargeth his soule with venial synne, the moore is he enclyned to fallen into deedly synne. And therfore lat us nat be negligent to deschargen us of venial synnes, for the proverbe seith that "manye smale

358. *oughte*, om. E.358. *amenuseth*, diminishes.

maken a greet." And herkne this ensample ; a greet wawe of the see comth somtyme with so greet a violence that it drencheth the shipe ; and the same harm dooth som tyme the smale dropses of water that entren thurgh a litel crevace into the thurrok, and in the botme of the shipe, if men be so negligent that they ne discharge hem nat by tyme. And therfore, although ther be a difference bitwixe thise two causes of drenchynge, algates the shipe is dreynt. [365] Right so fareth it somtyme of deedly synne, and of anyouse veniale synnes, whan they multiplie in a man so greetly that thilke worldly thynges that he loveth, thurgh whiche he synneth venyally, is as greet in his herte as the love of God, or moore. And therfore the love of every thyng that is nat biset in God ne doon principally for Goddes sake, al though that a man love it lasse than God, yet is it venial synne, and deedly synne whan the love of any thyng weyeth in the herte of man as muchel as the love of God or moore. Deedly synne, as seith Seint Augustyn, is "whan a man turneth his herte fro God, which that is verray, sovereyn bountee, that may nat chaunge, and geveth his herte to thyng that may chaunge and flitte ;" and certes, that is every thyng, save God of hevene. For sooth is that if a man geve his love, the which that he oweth al to God with al his herte, unto a creature, certes as muche as he geveth of his love to thilke creature, so muche he bireveth fro God, [370]

363. *drencheth*, drowns.363. *thurrok*, sink, hold of a ship.367. *weyeth*, E *wexeth*.

and therfore dooth he synne, for he that is dettour to God ne yeldeth nat to God al his dette, that is to seyn, al the love of his herte.

Now, sith man understondeth generally which is venial synne, thanne is it covenable to tellen specially of synnes whiche that many a man peraventure ne demeth hem nat synnes, and ne shryveth hem nat of the same thynges, and yet nathelees they been synnes. Soothly, as thise clerkes writen, this is to seyn, that at every tyme that a man eteth or drynketh moore than suffiseth to the sustenaunce of his body, in certein he dooth synne; and eek whan he speketh moore than nedeth it is synne; eke whan he herkneth nat benignely the compleint of the poure; eke whan he is in heele of body and wol nat faste whan hym oghte faste, withouten cause resonable; eke whan he slepeth moore than nedeth, or whan he comth by thilke enchesoun to late to chirche, or to othere werkes of charite; [375] eke whan he useth his wyf withouten sovereyn desir of engendrure, to the honour of God, or for the entente to yelde to his wyf the dette of his body; eke whan he wol nat visite the sike and the prisoner if he may; eke if he love wyf or child, or oother worldly thyng, moore than resoun requireth; eke if he flaterre or blandise moore than hym oghte, for any necessitee; eke if he amenuse or withdrawe the almesse of the poure; eke if he apparailleth his

374. *hee*, health.  
*hym oghte*, H<sup>6</sup> *other folk*  
(*other men*).

374. *enchesoun*, occasion.  
377. *amenuse*, diminish.  
*almesse*, alms.



mete moore deliciously than nede is, or ete to hastily, by likerousnesse; eke if he tale vanytees at chirche, or at Goddes service, or that he be a talker of ydel wordes, of folye, or of vileynye, for he shal yelden acountes of it at the day of doome; eke whan he biheteth or assureth to do thynges that he may nat perfourne; eke whan that he by lightnesse or folie mysseyeth or scorneth his neigheboore; [380] eke whan he hath any wikked suspeciou of thyng ther he ne woot of it no soothfastnesse; thise thynges and mo withoute nombre been synnes, as seith Seint Augustyn.

Now shal men understonde that al be it so that noon erthely man may eschue alle venial synnes, yet may he refreyne hym by the brennyng love that he hath to oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and by preyeres and confessioun and othere goode werkes, so that it shal but litel greve; for, as seith Seint Augustyn, "If a man love God in swich manere that al that evere he dooth is in the love of God, and for the love of God verrailly, for he brenneth in the love of God, looke, how muche that a drope of water that falleth in a fourneys ful of fyr anyeth or greveth, so muche anyeth a venial synne unto a man that is perfit in the love of Jhesu Crist." [385] Men may also refreyne venial synne by receyvyng worthily of the precious body of Jhesu Crist; by receyvyng eek of hooly water, by almesdede, by general confessioun of *Confiteor* at

378. *tale*, H *talks of*.382. *refreyne*, E *restreyne*.382. *hym*, H<sup>2</sup> *hem*.385. *worthily*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.

masse, and at complyn, and by blessinge of bisshopes and of preestes and oother goode werkes.

*Sequitur de septem peccatis mortalibus et eorum dependenciis et speciebus*

Now is it bihovely thyng to telle whiche been the deedly synnes, this is to seyn chieftaynes of synnes. Alle they renne in o lees, but in diverse maneres. Now been they cleped chieftaynes, for-as-muche as they been chief, and spryngen of alle othere synnes. Of the roote of thise sevene synnes thanne is pride, the general roote of alle harmes, for of this roote spryngen certein braunches, as ire; envye; accidie, or slewthe; avarice, or coveitise, to commune understondynge; glotonye, and lecherye. And everich of thise chief synnes hath hise braunches and hise twigges as shal be declared in hire chapitres folwyng.

*De Superbia*

[390] And thogh so be that no man kan outrely telle the nombre of twigges and of the harmes that cometh of pride, yet wol I shewe a partie of hem, as ye shul understonde. Ther is inobedience, avaunt-

*Sequitur de septem peccatis*, at this point Chaucer begins to follow the *Somme de Vices et de Vertus* of Frère Lorens, altering, however, his arrangement, and with less close logical coherence.

387. *in o lees*, in one leash.

*spryngen*, H *spryngers*, Heng. *sprynge*.

388. *as ire*, etc., these are really treated separately, and not as branches of Pride.

yunge, ypocrisie, despit, arrogance, inpudence, swellynge of herte, insolence, elacioun, incapience, strif, contumacie, presumpcioun, irreverence, pertinacie, veyne glorie and many another twig that I kan nat declare. Inobedient is he that disobeyeth for despit to the comandementz of God and to hise sovereyns and to his goostly fader. Avauntour is he that bosteth of the harm or of the bountee that he hath doon. Ypocrite is he that hideth to shewe hym swich as he is, and sheweth hym swich as he noght is. [395] Despitous is he that hath desdeyn of his neighebore, that is to seyn of his evene Cristene, or hath despit to doon that hym oghte to do. Arrogant is he that thynketh that he hath thilke bountees in hym that he hath noght, or weneth that he sholde have hem by hise desertes, or elles he demeth that he be that he nys nat. Inpudent is he that for his pride hath no shame of hise synnes. Swellynge of herte is whan a man rejoyseth hym of harm that he hath doon. Insolent is he that despiseth in his juggement alle othere folk, as to regard of his value, and of his konnyng, and of his spekyng, and of his beryng. [400] Elacioun is whan he ne may neither suffre to have maister ne felawe. Incapient is he that wol nat been y-taught ne undernome of his vice, and by strif werreieth trouthe wityngly, and deffendeth his folye. Contumax is he that thurgh his indignacioun is agayns everich auctoritee or power of hem that been hise sovereyns. Presumpcioun is

400. *neither*, H *never*.401. *undernome*, blamed.401. *werreieth*, battles against.

whan a man undertaketh an emprise that hym oghte nat do, or elles that he may nat do, and this is called surquidie. Irreverence is whan men do nat honour there as hem oghte to doon, and waiten to be reverenced. Pertinacie is whan man deffendeth hise folies, and trusteth to muchel in his owene wit. [405] Veyneglorie is for to have pompe and delit in his temporeel hynesse, and glorifie hym in this worldly estaat. Janglynge is whan men speken to muche biforn folk, and clappen as a mille and taken no kepe what they seye.

And yet is ther a privee spece of pride that waiteth first to be salewed er he wole salewe, al be he lasse worth than that oother is, peraventure; and eek he waiteth or desireth to sitte, or elles to goon above hym in the wey, or kisse pax, or been encensed, or goon to offryng biforn his neighebore, and swiche semblable thynges agayns his duetee, peraventure, but that he hath his herte and his entente in swich a proud desir to be magnified and honoured biforn the peple.

Now been ther two maneres of pride. That oon of hem is withinne the herte of man and that oother is withoute, [410] of whiche soothly thise forseide thynges, and mo than I have seyde, apertenen to pride that is in the herte of man, and that othere spesces of

403. *surquidie*, arrogance.  
*waiten*, watch.

406. *men speken . . . they*, H<sup>5</sup>  
*a man spekith . . . he*.

407. *privee spece*, secret kind.  
This section is Chaucer's addition.

407. *salewed*, saluted.  
*pax*, the vessel containing the sacred host at mass.

408. *semblable*, like.

409. *of hem is*, H is *heighnes*.

410. *apertenen*, belong.

pride been withoute; but natheles that oon of thise spesces of pride is signe of that oother, right as the gaye leafsel atte taverne is signe of the wyn that is in the ceier. And this is in manye thynges, as in speche and contenaunce, and in outrageous array of clothyng; for certes, if ther ne hadde be no synne in clothyng, Crist wolde nat so soone have noted and spoken of the clothyng of thilke riche man in the gospel. And as seith Seint Gregorie, "That precious clothyng is cowpable for the derthe of it, and for his softenesse and for his strangenesse and degisynesse, and for the superfluitee, and for the inordinat scantnesse of it."

[415] Allas! may men nat seen as in oure dayes the synful costlewe array of clothyng, and namely in to muche superfluite, or elles in to desordinat scantnesse?

As to the firste synne, in superfluitee of clothyng, which that maketh it so deere to harm of the peple, nat oonly the cost of embrowdyng, the degise, endentyng, barryng, owndyng, palyng, wyndyng or bendyng, and semblable wast of clooth in vanitee, but ther is also costlewe furryng in hir gownes, so muche pownsonyng of chisel to maken holes, so

411. *leafsel*, bower of leaves.

413. *so soone*, om. E.

414. On the subject of clothes, Chaucer greatly expands his original.

*cowpable*, blameable.

415. *desordinat*, disorderly.

417. *degise*, disguise.

*endentyng*, scalloping.

417. *barryng*, Heng.<sup>5</sup> or (H of) *barryng*, striping.

*owndyng* (waving), H *swandyng*.

*palyng* or *bendyng*, making a perpendicular or sloping stripe.

*wyndyng*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

418. *pownsonyng* or *pounsinge* (E *pownsonyng*), puncturing.

much daggyng of sheres, forth with the superfluitee in lengthe of the forseide gownes, trailyng in the dong, and in the mire, on horse and eek on foote, as wel of men as of wommen, that al thilke trailyng is verrailly as in effect wasted, consumed, thredbare, and roten with donge, rather than it is geven to the poure to greet damage of the forseide poure folk. [420] And that in sondry wise; this is to seyn, that the moore that clooth is wasted, the moore it costeth to the peple for the scantnesse. And forther-over if so be that they wolde geven swich powsoned and dagged clothynge to the poure folk, it is nat convenient to were for hire estaat, ne suffisant to beete hire necessitee to kepe hem fro the distemperance of the firmament.

Upon that oother side to speken of the horrible disordinat scantnesse of clothynge as been thise kuttet sloppes, or haynselyns, that thurgh hire shortnesse ne covere nat the shameful membres of man to wikked entente. Allas! somme of hem shewen the boce of hir shape, and the horrible swollen membres, that semeth lik the maladie of hirnia, in the wrappyng of hir hoses; and eek the buttokes of hem faren as it were the hyndre part of a she ape in the fulle of the moone. [425] And mooreover the wrecched swollen membres that they shewe thurgh the degisyng, in departyng of hire hoses in whit and reed, semeth

418. *daggyng*, slitting.

420. *it costeth*, H<sup>8</sup> *most* (*mote*)  
*it coste*.

421. *beete*, help.

422. *haynselyns* (H *anslets*),  
smocks.

423. *boce of hir shape* and, H<sup>8</sup>  
*schap and the boce* (boss)  
*of*.

that half hir shameful privee membres weren flayne. And if so be that they departen hire hoses in othere colours, as is whit and blak, or whit and blew, or blak and reed, and so forth, thanne semeth it as by vari-  
aunce of colour that half the partie of hire privee membres were corrupt by the fir of Seint Antoñy, or by cancre, or by oother swich meschaunce. Of the hyndre part of hir buttokes it is ful horrible for to see, for certes, in that partie of hir body ther as they purgen hir stynkyng ordure, that foule partie shewe they to the peple prowdly in despit of honestitee, the which honestitee that Jhesu Crist and hise freendes observede to shewen in hir lyve.

[430] Now of the outrageous array of wommen, God woot that though the visages of somme of hem seme ful chaast and debonaire, yet notifie they in hire array of atyr likerousnesse and pride. I sey nat that honestitee in clothyng of man or womman is uncoven-  
able, but certes the superfluitee or disordinat scantitee of clothyng is reprevable. Also the synne of aorne-  
ment, or of apparaille, is in thynges that apertenen to ridyng,—as in to manye delicat horses that been hoolden for delit, that been so faire, fatte, and cost-  
lewe, and also to many a vicious knave that is sustened by cause of hem ; in to curious harneys, as in sadeles, in crouperes, peytrels, and bridles covered with precious clothyng, and riche barres, and plates of

425. *flayne*, flayed.

428. *Of the hyndre*, H<sup>b</sup> *And yit*  
(yet) *of the hyndre*.

430. *atyr*, attire.

431. *uncovenable*, unsuitable.

433. *sustened*, H<sup>b</sup> *mayntened*.

*peytrels*, breast-pieces.

gold, and of silver ; for which God seith, by Zakarie the prophete, "I wol confounde the rideres of swiche horses." [435] This folk taken litel reward of the ridynge of Goddes sone of hevene and of his harneys whan he rood upon the asse, and ne hadde noon oother harneys but the poure clothes of hise disciples, ne we ne rede nat that evere he rood on oother beest. I speke this for the synne of superfluitee and nat for resonable honestitee, whan reson it requireth.

And forther, certes, pride is greetly notified in holdynge of greet meynee whan they be of litel profit, or of right no profit ; and namely whan that meynee is felonous and damageous to the peple, by hardynesse of heigh lordshipe, or by wey of offices ; for certes, swiche lordes sellen thanne hir lordshipe to the devel of helle whanne they sustenen the wikkednesse of hir meynee. [440] Or elles whan this folk of lowe degree, as thilke that holden hostelries, sustenynge the thefte of hire hostilers, and that is in many manere of deceites. Thilke manere of folk been the flyes that folwen the hony, or elles the houndes that folwen the careyne. Swich forseide folk stranglen spiritually hir lordshipes, for which thus seith David the prophete, "Wikked deeth moote come upon thilke lordshipes, and God geve that they moote descenden into helle al doun, al doun, for in hire houses been iniquitees and shrewednesses, and nat God of

441. *careyne*, carrion.

442. *upon*, E *up*, Camb.<sup>3</sup> *to*,  
Pet.<sup>3</sup> *on*.

442. *al doun*, *al doun*, H<sup>5</sup>  
*a-doun*, only repeated in  
Heng.



hevene." And certes, but if they doon amendement, right as God gaf his benysoun to Pharaos by the service of Jacob, and to Laban by the service of Joseph, right so God wol geve his malisoun to swiche lordshipes as sustenen the wikkednesse of hir servauntz, but if they come to amendement.

Pride of the table appeereth eek ful ofte, for certes, riche men been cleped to festes and poure folk been put away and rebuked. [445] Also in excesse of diverse metes and drynkes, and namely swiche manere bake-metes and dissh-metes brennyng of wilde fir, and peynted and castelled with papir, and semblable wast, so that it is abusioun for to thynke. And eek in to greet preciousnesse of vessel and curiositee of mynstralcie, by whiche a man is stired the moore to delices of luxurie. If so be that he sette his herte the lasse upon oure Lord Jhesu Crist, certeyn it is a synne; and certainly the delices myghte been so grete in this caas that man myghte lightly falle by hem into deedly synne.

The especes that sourden of pride, soothly, whan they sourden of malice ymaged, avised, and forncast, or elles of usage, been deedly synnes, it is no doute; and whan they sourden by freletee unavysed and sodeynly withdrawen ageyn, al been they grevouse synnes, I gesse that they ne been nat deedly.

443. *Pharaos* . . . *Jacob*, all the seven MSS. have the names in this order, so it may be Chaucer's mistake.

448. *especes*, kinds.

448. *sourden*, rise from. *avised*, deliberate. *formcast*, planned. *usage*, habit.

449. *freletee*, frailty.

[450] Now myghte men axe wher-of that pride souldeth and spryngeth, and I seye, somtyme it spryngeth of the goodes of nature, and somtyme of the goodes of fortune, and somtyme of the goodes of grace. Certes, the goodes of nature stonden outhur in goodes of body or in goodes of soule. Certes, goodes of body been heele of body, as strengthe, delivernesse, beautee, gentrie, franchise; goodes of nature of the soule been good wit, sharpe understondynge, subtil engyn, vertu natureel, good memorie; goodes of fortune been riches, hyghe degrees of lordshippes, preisynges of the peple; [455] goodes of grace been science, power to suffre spiritueel travaille, benygnee, vertuous contemplacioun, withstondynge of temptacioun, and semblable thynges; of whiche forseyde goodes, certes, it is a ful greet folye a man to priden hym in any of hem alle. Now as for to speken of goodes of nature; God woot that somtyme we han hem in nature as muche to oure damage as to oure profit. As for to speken of heele of body, certes, it passeth ful lightly, and eek it is ful ofte enchesoun of the siknesse of oure soule; for, God woot, the flessch is a ful greet enemy to the soule, and therfore the moore that the body is hool the moore be we in peril to falle. Eke for to pride hym in his strengthe of body, it is an heigh folye, for certes, the flessch coveiteth agayn the spirit, and ay the moore strong that the flessch is, the

451. *stonden*, consist.  
*delivernesse*, agility.

452. *gentrie* (E *gentries*), nobility.

453. *engyn*, contrivance.

458. *enchesoun*, occasion.

sorier may the soule be, [460] and over al this, strengthe of body and worldly hardynesse causeth ful ofte many a man to peril and meschaunce. Eek for to pride hym of his gentrie is ful greet folie, for ofte tyme the gentrie of the body binymeth the gentrie of the soule, and eek we ben alle of o fader and of o mooder, and alle we been of o nature, roten and corrupt, bothe riche and poure. Forsothe o manere gentrie is for to preise—that apparailleth mannes corage with vertues and moralitees and maketh hym Cristes child; for truste wel, that over what man that synne hath maistrie he is a verray cherl to synne.

Now been ther generale signes of gentillesse, as eschewynge of vice and ribaudye and servage of synne, in word, in werk, and contenance, [465] and usynge vertu, curteisye, and clenness, and to be liberal, that is to seyn, large by mesure, for thilke that passeth mesure is folie and synne. Another is to remembre hym of bountee that he of oother folk hath receyved. Another is to be benigne to hise goode subgetis, wherfore seith Senek, "Ther is no thing moore covenantable to a man of heigh estaat, than debonairetee and pitee;" and therfore thise flyes that men clepeth bees, whan they maken hir kyng they chesen oon that hath no prikke wherwith he may styng.

Another is, a man to have a noble herte, and a

461. *binymeth*, takes away.

465. *large by mesure*, generous in moderation.

467. *subgetis*, subjects.

469. *a man*, E *man*.

diligent to attayne to heighe vertuose thynges. Now certes, a man to pride hym in the goodes of grace is eek an outrageous folie, for thilke gifte of grace that sholde have turned hym to goodnesse and to medicine, turneth hym to venym and to confusioun, as seith Seint Gregorie. [470] Certes also, whoso prideth hym in the goodes of fortune, he is a ful greet fool, for somtyme is a man a greet lord by the morwe, that is a caytyf and a wrecche er it be nyght; and somtyme the richesse of a man is cause of his deth, somtyme the delices of a man is cause of the grevous maladye thurgh which he dyeth. Certes, the commendacioun of the peple is somtyme ful fals and ful brotel for to triste,—this day they preyse, tomorwe they blame; God woot, desir to have commendacioun of the peple hath caused deeth to many a bisy man.

*Remedium contra peccatum Superbie*

[475] Now sith that so is that ye han understonde what is pride, and whiche been the spesces of it, and whennes pride sourdeth and spryngeth, now shul ye understonde which is the remedie agayns the synne of pride; and that is humylitee or mekenesse, that is a vertu thurgh which a man hath verray knoweleche of hymself, and holdeth of hymself no pris ne deyntee,

473. *brotel*, brittle.  
*triste*, trust.

474. *Remedium*, in the *Somme de Vices*, etc., the remedies and the sins are kept apart. Chaucer

brings each remedy after its sin.

476. *the synne of pride*, H<sup>5</sup> *pride*.

477. *pris ne deyntee*, price nor value.

as in regard of hise desertes, considerynge evere his freletee.

Now been ther thre maneres of humylitee, as humylitee in herte, and another humylitee in his mouth, the thridde in hise werkes.

The humilitee in herte is in foure maneres. That oon is whan a man holdeth hymself as noght worth biforn God of hevene. Another is, whan he ne despiseth noon oother man. [480] The thridde is whan he rekketh nat though men holde hym noght worth. The ferthe is whan he nys nat sory of his humiliacioun.

Also the humilitee of mouth is in foure thynges; in attempree speche, and in humblesse of speche; and whan he biknoweth with his owene mouth that he is swich as hym thynketh that he is in his herte; another is whan he preiseth the bountee of another man and no thyng ther of amenuseth.

Humilitee eek in werkes is in foure maneres; the firste is whan he putteth othere men biforn hym; the seconde is to chese the loweste place over al; the thridde is gladly to assente to good conseil; the ferthe is to stonde gladly to the award of hise sovereyns, or of hym that is in hyer degree. Certein this is a greet werk of humylitee.

478. *in his mouth . . . in hise werkes*; some MSS. om. *his*; others read *is in*.

481. *attempree*, temperate.

481. *biknoweth*, confesses. *amenuseth*, diminishes.

482. *good conseil*, E om. *good stonde to*, accept.

*Sequitur de Invidia*

After pride wol I speken of the foule synne of envye, which is, as by the word of the philosophre, sorwe of oother mannes prosperitee; and after the word of Seint Augustyn, it is sorwe of oother mannes wele and joye of othere mennes harm. [485] This synne is platly agayns the Hooly Goost. Al be it so that every synne is agayns the Hooly Goost, yet nathelees for-as-muche as bountee aperteneth proprely to the Hooly Goost and envye comth proprely of malice, therfore it is proprely agayn the bountee of the Hooly Goost.

Now hath malice two speses, that is to seyn, hardnesse of herte in wikkednesse, or elles the flessch of man is so blynd that he considereth nat that he is in synne, or rekketh nat that he is in synne, which is the hardnesse of the devel.

That oother spece of malice is whan a man werreyeth trouthe whan he woot that it is trouthe, and eek whan he werreyeth the grace that God hath geve to his neighebore; and al this is by envye. Certes thanne is envye the worste synne that is; for soothly alle othere synnes been somtyme oonly agayns o special vertu, but certes, envye is agayns alle vertues, and agayns alle goodnesses, for it is sory of alle the bountees of his neighebore; and in this manere it is

485. *platly*, flatly.  
*Goost*, om. E.  
*bountee*, goodness.

487. *spece*, E. *speche*.  
*malice*, H<sup>b</sup> *envye*.  
*werreyeth*, fights against.

divers from alle othere synnes ; [490] for wel unnethe is ther any synne that it ne hath som delit in itself save oonly envye, that evere hath in itself angwissh and sorwe.

The speses of envye been thise ; ther is first, sorwe of oother mannes goodnesse and of his prosperitee ; and prosperitee is kyndely matere of joye ; thanne is envye a synne agayns kynde. The seconde spece of envye is joye of oother mannes harm ; and that is proprely lyk to the devel, that evere rejoyseth hym of mannes harm.

Of thise two speses comth bakbityng, and this synne of bakbityng, or detraccion, hath certeine speses, as thus ; som man preiseth his neighebores by a wikke entente, for he maketh alwey a wikked knotte atte laste ende, alwey he maketh a "but" atte laste ende,—that is digne of moore blame than worth is al the preisyng. [495] The seconde spece is that if a man be good, and dooth or seith a thing to good entente, the bakbiter wol turne all thilke goodnesse up-so-doun, to his shrewed entente. The thridde is to amenuse the bountee of his neighebores. The fourthe spece of bakbityng is this, that if men speke goodnesse of a man, thanne wol the bakbiter seyn, "Pardee ! swich a man is yet bet than he," in dispreisyng of hym that men preise.

The fiftre spece is this, for to consente gladly and

490. *unnethe*, hardly.

491. *kyndely*, naturally.

494. *digne*, worthy.

495. *to his shrewed entente*, to his own wicked meaning.

496. *amenuse*, depreciate.

497. *bet*, better.

herkne gladly to the harm that men speke of oother folk ; this synne is ful greet and ay encreeseth after the wikked entente of the bakbiter.

After bakbityng cometh grucchyng or murmura-  
cioun, and somtyme it spryngeth of inpacience agayns  
God, and somtyme agayns man.

[500] Agayns God it is whan a man grucbeth agayn  
the peynes of helle, or agayns poverte, or los of catel,  
agayn reyn or tempest, or elles grucbeth that shrewes  
han prosperitee, or elles for that goode men han  
adversitee ; and alle thise thynges sholde men suffre  
patiently, for they comen by the rightful juggement  
and ordinance of God. Somtyme comth grucching  
of avarice, as Judas grucched agayns the Magdaleyne,  
whan she enoynte the heved of oure Lord Jhesu  
Crist with hir precious oynement. This maner  
murmure is swich as whan man grucbeth of good-  
nesse that hymself dooth, or that oother folk doon of  
hir owene catel.

Somtyme comth murmure of pride, as whan Simon  
the Pharisee grucched agayn the Magdaleyne whan  
she approched to Jhesu Crist and weepe at his feet for  
hire synnes. [505] And somtyme grucchyng sourdeth  
of envye, whan men discovereth a mannes harm that  
was pryvee, or bereth hym on hond thyng that is fals.

Murmure eek is ofte amonges servantz, that  
grucchen whan hir sovereyns bidden hem doon leveful  
thynges ; and, for-as-muche as they dar nat openly

500. *shrewes*, rascals.

502. *enoynte the heved*,  
anointed the head.

505. *bereth on hond*, accuse.

506. *leveful*, lawful.



withseye the comaundementz of hir sovereyns, yet wol they seyn harm, and grucche and murmure prively, for verray despit, whiche wordes men clepen "the develes *Pater noster*," though so be that the devel ne hadde nevere *Pater noster*, but that lewed folk geven it swich a name. Somtyme grucchyng comth of ire, or prive hate that norisseth rancour in herte, as afterward I shal declare. [510] Thanne cometh eek bitterness of herte, thurgh which bitterness every good dede of his neighebor semeth to hym bitter and unsavory. Thanne cometh discord that unbyndeth alle manere of freendshipe. Thanne comth scornynge of his neighebor, al do he never so weel. Thanne comth accusynge, as whan man seketh occasioun to anoyen his neighebor, which that is lyk to the craft of the devel, that waiteth bothe nyght and day to accusen us alle. Thanne comth malignitee, thurgh which a man anoyeth his neighebor prively, if he may; and if he noght may, algate his wikked wil ne shal nat wante, as for to brennen his hous pryvely, or empoysone or sleen hise beestes, and semblable thynges.

[515] *Remedium contra peccatum Invidie*

Now wol I speke of the remedie agayns this foule synne of envye. First is the lovyng of God principal, and lovyng of his neighebor as hymself; for soothly that oon ne may nat been withoute that oother. And

507. *withseye*, contradict; H  
*withstonde*.  
*grucche*, grumble.

508. *folk . . . name*, H *men*  
*calle it so*.  
 515. *agayns this*, E *the for this*.

truste wel, that in the name of thy neighebores thou shalt understonde the name of thy brother ; for certes alle we have o fader flesshly, and o mooder, that is to seyn, Adam and Eve, and eek o Fader espriteuel, and that is God of hevene. Thy neighebores artow holden for to love and wilne hym alle goodnesse, and therfore seith God, " Love thy neighebores as thyselfe ; " that is to seyn, to salvacioun of lyf and of soule. And moore-over thou shalt love hym in word, and in benigne amonestynge and chastisynge, and conforten hym in hise anoyes, and preye for hym with al thyn herte. And in dede thou shalt love hym in swich wise that thou shalt doon to hym in charitee as thou woldest that it were doon to thyn owene persone ; [520] and therfore thou ne shalt doon hym no damage in wikked word, ne harm in his body, ne in his catel, ne in his soule by entissyng of wikked ensample ; thou shalt nat desiren his wyf, ne none of hise thynges. Understood eek, that in the name of neighebor is comprehended his enemy. Certes man shal loven his enemy by the comandement of God, and soothly, thy freend shaltow love in God. I seye, thyn enemy shaltow love for Goddes sake by his comandement ; for if it were reson that a man sholde haten his enemy, for-sothe God nolde nat receyven us to his love, that been hise enemys.

Agayns thre manere of wronges that his enemy dooth to hym he shal doon thre thynges, as thus :

517. *holden*, bound.  
*wilne*, desire for.

518. *amonestynges*, admonition.  
524. *wronges*, E *thynges*.

[525] agayns hate and rancour of herte, he shal love hym in herte ; agayns chidyng and wikkede wordes, he shal preye for his enemy ; and agayn wikked dede of his enemy, he shal doon hym bountee ; for Crist seith, " Loveth youre enemys, and preyeth for hem that speke yow harm, and eek for hem that yow chacen and pursewen, and dooth bountee to hem that yow haten." Loo, thus comaundeth us oure Lord Jhesu Crist to do to oure enemys, for soothly nature dryveth us to loven oure freendes, and *parfey*, oure enemys han moore nede to love than oure freendes, and they that moore nede have, certes, to hem shal men doon goodnesse ; and certes, in thilke dede have we remembrance of the love of Jhesu Crist that deyde for hise enemys. And, in as muche as thilke love is the moore grevous to perfourne, in so muche is the moore gretter the merite, and therfore the lovyng of oure enemy hath confounded the venym of the devel ; [530] for, right as the devel is disconfited by humylitee, right so is he wounded to the deeth by love of oure enemy. Certes thanne is love the medicine that casteth out the venym of envye fro mannes herte. The spes of this paas shullen be moore largely in hir chapitres folwyng declared.

*Sequitur de Ira*

After envye wol I discryven the synne of ire ; for soothly whoso hath envye upon his neighebor anon

532. *paas*, II *part.*

533. *discryven*, describe.

he wole comunly fynde hym a matere of wratthe in word, or in dede, agayns hym to whom he hath envye. And as wel comth ire of pride as of envye, for soothly he that is proude or envyous is lightly wrooth.

[535] This synne of ire, after the discryvyng of Seint Augustyn, is wikked wil to been avenged by word or by dede. Ire, after the philosophre, is the fervent blood of man y-quyked in his herte, thurgh which he wole harm to hym that he hateth. For certes, the herte of man, by eschawfyng and moevyng of his blood, wexeth so trouble that he is out of alle juggement of resoun.

But ye shal understonde that ire is in two maneres ; that oon of hem is good and that oother is wikked. The goode ire is by jalousie of goodnesse, thurgh which a man is wrooth with wikkednesse, and agayns wikkednesse ; and therfore seith a wys man, that ire is bet than pley. [540] This ire is with debonairetee, and it is wrooth withouten bitterness, nat wrooth agayns the man, but wrooth with the mysdede of the man, as seith the prophete David, *Irascimini, et nolite peccare*.

Now understondeth that wikked ire is in two maneres, that is to seyn, sodeyn ire, or hastif ire withouten avisement and consentyng of resoun. The menyng and the sens of this is that the resoun of man ne consente nat to thilke sodeyn ire, and thanne it is

537. *eschawfyng*, chafing, heating.

540. *with debonairetee*, accompanied by gentleness.

542. *sens*, H *sentence*.

venial. Another ire is ful wikked, that comth of felonie of herte, avysed and cast biforn with wikked wil to do vengeance, and therto his resoun consenteth, and soothly this is deedly synne. This ire is so displesant to God that it troubleth his hous and chaceth the Hooly Goost out of mannes soule, and wasteth and destroyeth the liknesse of God, that is to seyn, the vertu that is in mannes soule, [545] and put in hym the liknesse of the devel, and bynymeth the man fro God that is his rightful lord. This ire is a ful greet plesauce to the devel, for it is the develes fourneys that is eschawfed with the fir of helle. For certes, right so as fir is moore mighty to destroyen erthely thynges than any oother element, right so ire is myghty to destroyen alle spiritueel thynges.

Looke how that fir of smale gleedes, that been almoost dede under asshen, wollen quike agayn whan they been touched with brymston. Right so ire wol everemo quyken agayn whan it is touched by the pride that is covered in mannes herte; for certes, fir ne may nat comen out of no thyng, but if it were first in the same thyng natureelly, as fir is drawen out of flyntes with steel. [550] And, right so as pride is ofte tyme matere of ire, right so is rancour norice and keper of ire. Ther is a maner tree, as seith Seint Ysidre, that whan men maken fire of thilke tree and covere the coles of it with asshen, soothly the fir of it wol lasten

545. *put*, putteth.  
*bynymeth*, takes away.  
 548. *gleedes*, sparks.

548. *quike*, revive.  
 551. *Ysidre*, Isidore.

al a yeer or moore, and right so fareth it of rancour ; whan it is ones conceyved in the hertes of som men, certein it wol lasten peraventure from oon Estre day unto another Estre day and moore ; but certes, thilke man is ful fer fro the mercy of God in thilke while.

In this forseide develes fourneys ther forgen thre shrewes : Pride, that ay bloweth and encreesseth the fir by chidyng and wikked wordes ; [555] thanne stant Envy, and holdeth the hote iren upon the herte of man with a peire of longe toonges of long rancour ; and thanne stant the synne of Contumelie or strif and cheeste, and batereth and forgeth by vileyns reprevynges. Certes, this cursed synne anoyeth bothe to the man hymself and eek to his neigheore. For soothly almoost al the harm that any man dooth to his neigheore comth of wratthe ; for certes outrageous wratthe dooth al that evere the devel hym comaundeth : for he ne spareth neither Crist, ne his sweete mooder. And in his outrageous anger and ire, alas ! alas ! ful many oon at that tyme feeleth in his herte ful wikkedly both of Crist and of alle hise halwes.

[560] Is nat this a cursed vice ? Yis, certes. Allas ! it bynymeth from man his wit and his resoun and al his debonaire lif espiritueel, that sholde kepen his soule.

Certes it bynymeth eek Goddes due lordshipe, and

552. *Estre*, Easter.

556. *cheeste*, strife.

558. *sweete*, H<sup>3</sup> om.

559. *halwes*, saints.

560. *bynymeth*, takes away.

that is mannes soule and the love of hise neighebores. It stryveth eek alday agayn trouthe. It reveth hym the quiete of his herte and subverteth his soule.

Of ire comen thise stynkyng engendrures; first, hate, that is oold wratthe; discord, thurgh which a man forsaketh his olde freend that he hath lovede ful longe; and thanne cometh werre, and every manere of wrong that man dooth to his neighebores in body, or in catel. Of this cursed synne of ire cometh eek manslaughtre, and understonde wel that homycide, that is manslaughtre, is in diverse wise. Som manere of homycide is spiritueel, and som is bodily.

[565] Spiritueel manslaughtre is in sixe thynges. First, by hate, as Seint John seith, "He that hateth his brother is homycide." Homycide is eek by bakbitynge; of whiche bakbiteres seith Salomon, that they han two swerdes with whiche they sleen hire neighebores; for soothly as wikke is to bynyme his good name, as his lyf. Homycide is eek in gevyng of wikked conseil by fraude, as for to geven conseil to areysen wrongful custumes and taillages, of whiche seith Salomon: "Leoun rorynge and bere hongry been like to the crueel lordshipes in withholdynge or abreggyng of the shepe, or the hyre, or of the wages of servauntz, or elles in usures or in withdrawynge of the almesse of poure folk." For which the wise man

562. *that he hath lovede*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

567. *areysen*, raise.

567. *taillages*, tallages, taxes on the demesne lands of the crown.

seith, "Fedeth hym that almoost dyeth for honger;" for soothly, but if thow feede hym, thou sleest hym. And alle thise been deedly synnes. [570] Bodily manslaughter is whan thow sleest him with thy tonge in oother manere, as whan thou comandest to sleen a man, or elles gevest hym conseil to sleen a man.

Manslaughtre in dede is in foure maneres. That oon is by lawe, right as a justice dampneth hym that is coupable to the deeth; but lat the justice be war that he do it rightfully, and that he do it nat for delit to spille blood, but for kepyng of rightwisenesse. Another homicide is that is doon for necessitee, as whan o man sleeth another in his defendaunt, and that he ne may noon ootherwise escape from his owene deeth; but certainly, if he may escape withouten manslaughter of his adversarie and sleeth hym, he dooth synne, and he shal bere penance as for deedly synne. Eek if a man by caas or aventure shete an arwe, or caste a stoon, with which he sleeth a man, he is homicide. [575] Eek if a womman by negli-gence overlyeth hire child in hir slepyng, it is homicide and deedly synne. Eek whan man destourbeth concepcioun of a child, and maketh a womman outhere bareyne by drynkyng venemouse herbes thurgh which she may nat conceyve, or sleeth a child by drynkes, or elles putteth certeine material thynges in hire secree places to slee the child, or elles dooth unkyndely synne by which man or womman shedeth hire nature, in manere or in place ther as a child may

572. *is that is*, H<sup>6</sup> *is*.

576. *by drynkes*, E adds *wilfully*.



nat be conceived, or elles if a woman have conceyved and hurt hirselfe, and sleeth the child, yet it is homycide. What seye we eek of wommen that mordren hir children for drede of worldly shame? Certes, an horrible homicide! Homycide is eek if a man approacheth to a womman by desir of lecherie, thurgh which the child is perissed, or elles smyteth a womman wityngly, thurgh which she leseth hir child. Alle thise been homycides and horrible deedly synnes.

[580] Yet comen ther of ire manye mo synnes, as wel in word, as in thoght and in dede, as he that arretteth upon God, or blameth God of thyng of which he is hym self gilty, or despiseth God, and alle hise halwes, as doon thise cursede hasardours in diverse contrees. This cursed synne doon they whan they feelen in hir hertes ful wikkedly of God and of hise halwes; also whan they treten unreverently the sacrament of the auter,—thilke synne is so greet that unnethe may it been releessed but that the mercy of God passeth alle hise werkes, it is so greet, and he so benigne.

Thanne comth of ire attray angre, whan a man is sharply amonested in his shrifte to forleten his synne, thanne wole he be angry and answeren hokerly and angrily, and deffenden or excusen his synne by unstedefastnesse of his flessch, or elles he dide it for to

577. *hirselfe*, E *hir child*.

579. *perissed*, destroyed.  
*leseth*, H<sup>2</sup> *sleeth*.

580. *arretteth*, imputes.

582. *auter*, altar.

583. *attray*, venomous.  
*forleten*, abandon.

584. *hokerly*, scornfully.

holde compaignye with hise felawes, or elles he seith, the fend enticed hym, [585] or elles he dide it for his youthe, or elles his compleccioun is so corageous that he may nat forbere, or elles it is his destinee, as he seith, unto a certein age, or elles, he seith, it cometh hym of gentillesse of hise auncestres, and semblable thynges. Alle this manere of folk so wrappen hem in hir synnes that they ne wol nat delivere himself; for soothly no wight that excuseth hym wilfully of his synne may nat been delivered of his synne, til that he mekely biknoweth his synne.

After this thanne cometh sweryng, that is expres agayn the comandement of God; and this bifalleth ofte of anger and of ire. God seith, "Thow shalt nat take the name of thy Lord God in veyn," or in ydel. Also oure Lord Jhesu Crist seith, by the word of Seint Mathew, "Ne wol ye nat swere in alle manere; neither by hevene, for it is Goddes trone; ne by erthe, for it is the bench of his feet; ne by Jerusalem, for it is the citee of a greet kyng; ne by thyn heed, for thou mayst nat make an heer whit ne blak; [590] but seyeth by youre word, 'ye, ye,' and 'nay, nay;' and what that is moore it is of yvel," seith Crist. For Cristes sake, ne swereth nat so synfully, in dismembrynge of Crist by soule, herte, bones, and body; for certes it semeth that ye thynke that

584. *fend*, fiend.

585. *compleccioun*, temperament.

*corageous*, ardent.

586. *biknoweth* confesses.

591. *dismembrynge*, i.e. the swearing by Christ's different members; cp. *Pardoner's Tale*, ll. 474, 475.

the cursede Jewes ne dismembred nat ynough the precieuse persone of Crist, but ye disembre hym moore. And if so be that the lawe compelle yow to swere, thanne rule yow after the lawe of God in youre sweryng, as seith Jeremye, 4° c°, Thou shalt kepe thre condicions ; "thou shalt swere in trouthe, in doom, and in rightwisnesse ;" this is to seyn, thou shalt swere sooth ; for every lesynge is agayns Crist, for Crist is verray trouthe. And thynk wel this, that every greet swerere nat compelled lawefully to swere, the wounde shal nat departe from his hous whil he useth swich unleveful sweryng. Thou shalt sweren eek in doom whan thou art constreyned by thy domesman to witennessen the trouthe. [595] Eek thou shalt nat swere for envye, ne for favour, ne for meede, but for rightwisnesse, and for declaracioun of it, to the worshiþe of God, and helpyng of thyne evene Cristene. And therfore, every man that taketh Goddes name in ydel, or falsly swereth with his mouth, or elles taketh on hym the name of Crist, to be called a Cristene man, and lyveth agayns Cristes lyvyng and his techyng, alle they taken Goddes name in ydel.

Looke eek, what Seint Peter seith, *Actuum* 4°, *Non est aliud nomen sub celo*, etc. : "Ther nys noon oother name," seith Seint Peter, "under hevene geven to men, in which they mowe be saved ;" that is to seyn, but the name of Jhesu Crist. Take kepe eek how that the name of Crist so precious is, as seith

592. *doom*, judgment.593. *lesynge*, lie.594. *domesman*, judge.596. *lyvyng*, spelt *luyunge* in E, so in 640.

Seint Paul *ad Philipenses* 2°, *In nomine Jhesu*, etc. : that "in the name of Jhesu every knee of hevenely creatures, or erthely, or of helle, sholden bowe ;" for it is so heigh and so worshipful that the cursede feend in helle sholde tremblen to heeren it y-nempned. Thanne semeth it that men that sweren so horribly by his blessed name, that they despise hym moore booldely than dide the cursede Jewes, or elles the devel, that trembleth whan he heereth his name.

[600] Now certes, sith that sweryng, but if it be lawefully doon, is so heighly deffended, muche worse is forsweryng falsly, and yet nedelees.

What seye we eek of hem that deliten hem in sweryng and holden it a gentrie or a manly dede to swere grete othes? And what of hem that of verray usage ne cesse nat to swere grete othes, al be the cause nat worth a straw? Certes, it is horrible synne. Swerynge sodeynly, withoute avysement, is eek a synne. But lat us go now to thilke horrible sweryng of adjuracioun and conjuracioun, as doon thise false enchauntours or nigromanciens, in bacyns ful of water, or in a bright swerd, in a cercle, or in a fir, or in a shulder-boon of a sheepe! I kan nat seye but that they doon cursedly and damnably agayns Crist, and al the feith of hooly Chirche.

[605] What seye we of hem that bileeven in divynails, as by flight or by noyse of briddes, or of

600. *deffended*, forbidden.

603. *bacyns*, basins.

605. *divynails*, divinations.

beestes, or by sort, by geomancie, by dremes, by chirkyng of dores, or crakyng of houses, by gnawynge of rattes, and swich manere wrecchednesse? Certes, al this thyng is deffended by God, and by al hooly Chirche, for which they been acursed til they come to amendement that on swich filthe setten hire bileeve. Charmes for woundes or maladie of men, or of beestes, if they taken any effect, it be peraventure that God suffreth it, for folk sholden geve the moore feith and reverence to his name.

Now wol I speken of lesynges, which generally is fals signyfificacioun of word in entente to deceyven his evene Cristene. Some lesynge is, of which ther comth noon advantage to no wight; and som lesynge turneth to the ese and profit of o man, and to disese and damage of another man. [610] Another lesynge for to saven his lyf or his catel. Another lesynge comth of delit for to lye, in which delit they wol forge a long tale and peynten it with alle circumstaunces, where al the ground of the tale is fals. Som lesynge comth for he wole sustene his word; and som lesynge comth of reccheleesnesse withouten avisement, and semblable thynges.

Lat us now touche the vice of flaterynge, which ne comth nat gladly, but for drede, or for coveitise. Flaterye is generally wrongful preisyng. Flatereres been the develes norices, that norissen hise children

605. *sort*, lot.

*geomancie*, divination by figures made on the earth.

605. *chirkyng*, creaking.

609. *disese and*, om. H<sup>o</sup>.

611. *reccheleesnesse*, recklessness.

with milk of losengerie. Forsothe Salomon seith that flaterie is wors than detraccioun, for somtyme detraccion maketh an hauteyn man be the moore humble, for he dredeth detraccion; but certes, flaterie, that maketh a man to enhauncen his herte and his contenance. [615] Flatereres been the develes enchauntours, for they make a man to wene of hymself be lyk that he nys nat lyk; they been lyk to Judas, that bitraysed God, and thise flatereres bitraysen a man to sellen hym to hise enemy, that is to the devel. Flatereres been the develes chapelleyens that syngen evere *Placebo*. I rekene flaterie in the vices of ire, for ofte tyme if o man be wrooth with another, thanne wole he flatere som wight to sustene hym in his querele.

Speke we now of swich cursynge as comth of irous herte. Malisoun generally may be seyde every maner power or harm. Swich cursynge bireveth man fro the regne of God, as seith Seint Paul. [620] And ofte tyme swich cursynge wrongfully retorneth agayn to hym that curseth, as a bryd that retorneth agayn to his owene nest. And over alle thyng men oghten eschewe to cursen hire children, and geven to the devel hire engendrure, as ferforth as in hem is; certes it is greet peril and greet synne.

Lat us thanne speken of chidyng and reproche, whiche been ful grete woundes in mannes herte, for

613. *losengerie*, false praise.

614. *hauteyn*, proud.

618. *I rekene flaterie*, Chaucer's unhappy defence of the digression in the *Somme*.

they unsowen the semes of freendshipe in mannes herte. For certes, unnethes may a man pleynty been accorded with hym that hath hym openly revyld and reprevyd in disclaundre. This is a ful grisly synne, as Crist seith in the gospel. And taak kepe now, that he that repreveth his neighebor, outhur he repreveth hym by som harm of peyne that he hath on his body, as, "mesel!" "croked harlot!" or by som synne that he dooth. [625] Now if he repreve hym by harm of peyne, thanne turneth the repreve to Jhesu Crist, for peyne is sent by the rightwys sonde of God, and by his suffrance, be it meselrie, or mayme, or maladie. And if he repreve hym uncharitably of synne, as "thou dronkelewe harlot!" and so forth, thanne aperteneth that to the rejoysynge of the devel, that evere hath joye that men doon synne.

And certes chidyng may nat come but out of a vileyns herte, for after the habundance of the herte speketh the mouth ful ofte. And ye shul understonde that. Looke by any wey whan any man shal chastise another, that he be war from chidyng and reprevynge; for trewely but he be war he may ful lightly quyken the fir of angre, and of wratthe, which that he sholde quenche, and peraventure sleeth hym which that he myght chastise with benignitee. For as seith Salomon, "The amyable tonge is the tree of lyf;" that is to seyn, of lyf espritueel, and soothly, a

623. *disclaundre*, slander.624. *mesel*, leper.625. *sonde*, message.*mayme* (E. *mahey*m), maiming.

deslavee tonge sleeth the spirites of hym that reprevehth and eek of hym that is repreved. [630] Loo, what seith Seint Augustyn, "Ther is no thyng so lyk the develes child as he that ofte chideth." Seint Paul seith eek, "A servant of God bihoveth nat to chide." And how that chidyng be a vileyns thyng bitwixe alle manere folk, yet is it, certes, moost uncovenable bitwixe a man and his wyf, for there is nevere reste, and therfore seith Salomon, "An hous that is uncovered in reyn and droppynge and a chidyng wyf been lyke." A man that is in a droppynge hous in manye places, though he eschewe the droppynge in o place, it droppeth on hym in another place; so fareth it by a chidyng wyf, but she chide hym in o place she wol chide hym in another; and therfore, "Bettre is a morsel of breed with joye than an hous ful of delices with chidyng," seith Salomon. Seint Paul seith, "O ye wommen, be ye subgetes to youre housbondes, as bihoveth in God, and ye men loveth youre wyves." *Ad Colossenses 3°.*

[635] Afterward speke we of scornynge, which is a wikked synne, and namely whan he scorneth a man for hise goode werkes; for certes, swiche scorneres faren lyk the foule tode that may nat endure to smelle the soote savour of the vyne whanne it florisssheth. Thise scorneres been partyng-felawes with the devel,

629. *deslavee*, unbridled.

631. *And how that*, *H though*  
for *how*.  
*uncovenable*, out of place.  
*droppynge*, dripping.

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634. *as bihoveth in God*, om. E.

636. *tode*, toad.  
*soote*, sweet.

637. *partyng-felawes*, partners.



for they han joye whan the devel wynneth, and sorwe whan he leseth ; they been adversaries of Jhesu Crist, for they haten that he loveth, that is to seyn, salva-cioun of soule.

Speke we now of wikked conseil, for he that wikked conseil geveth is a traytour ; he deceyveth hym that trusteth in hym ; *Ut Achitofel ad Absolonem*. But natheles yet is his wikked conseil first agayn hymself, [640] for, as seith the wise man, "Every fals lyvyng hath his propertee in hymself, that he that wole anoye another man, he anoyeth first hymself." And men shul understonde that man shal nat taken his conseil of fals folk, ne of angry folk, or grevous folk that loven specially to muchel hir owene profit ; ne to muche worldly folk ; namely in conseilynge of soules.

Now comth the synne of hem that sowen and maken discord amonges folk ; which is a synne that Crist hateth outrely, and no wonder is for he deyde for to make concord. And moore shame do they to Crist, than dide they that hym crucifiede, for God loveth bettre that freendshipe be amonges folk than he dide his owene body, the which that he gaf for unitee. Therefore been they likned to the devel, that evere been aboute to maken discord.

Now comth the synne of double tonge swiche as speken faire byform folk and wikkedly bihynde, or elles they maken semblant as though they speeke of good entencioun or elles in game and pley, and yet they speke of wikked entente.

[645] Now comth biwreying of conseil, thurgh which a man is defamed; certes, unnethe may he restooere the damage.

Now comth manace, that is an open folye, for he that ofte manaceth, he threteth moore than he may perfourne ful ofte tyme.

Now cometh ydel wordes that is withouten profit of hym that speketh tho wordes, and eek of hym that herkneth tho wordes. Or elles ydel wordes been tho that been nedelee, or withouten entente of natureel profit. And al be it that ydel wordes been somtyme venial synne, yet sholde men douten hem, for we shul geve rekenynge of hem bifore God.

Now comth janglynge, that may nat been withoute synne. And as seith Salomon, it is a synne of apert folye, [650] and therfore a philosophre seyde, whan men axed hym how that men sholde plesse the peple, and he answerde, "Do manye goode werkes and spek fewe jangles."

After this comth the synne of japeres, that been the develes apes, for they maken folk to laughe at hire japerie as folk doon at the gawdes of an ape. Swich japes deffendeth Seint Paul. Looke, how that vertuose wordes and hooly woordes conforten hem that travaillen in the service of Crist, right so conforten the vileyns wordes and knakkes of japeris hem that travaillen in the service of the devel. Thise been the

649. *janglynge* (chattering),

Chaucer's addition.

*apert*, open.

651. *japeres*, jesters.

651. *gawdes*, toys, fineries.

*japes*, E *japeres*.

*deffendeth*, forbids.

synnes that comen of the tonge, that comen of ire,  
and of othere synnes mo.

*Sequitur remedium contra peccatum Ire*

The remedie agayns ire is a vertu that men clepen mansuetude, that is debonairetee, and eek another vertu that men callen pacience, or suffrance.

[655] Debonairetee withdraweth and refreyneth the stirynges and the moevynges of mannes corage in his herte, in swich manere that they ne skippe nat out by angre ne by ire.

Suffrance suffreth swetely alle the anoyaunces and the wronges that men doon to man outward. Seint Jerome seith thus of debonairetee, that it dooth noon harm to no wight, ne seith, ne for noon harm that men doon or seyn he ne eschawfeth nat agayns his resoun. This vertu som tyme comth of nature, for, as seith the philosophre, "A man is a quyk thyng by nature, debonaire and trefable to goodnesse;" but whan debonairetee is enformed of grace thanne is it the moore worth.

Pacience, that is another remedie agayns ire, is a vertu that suffreth swetely every mannes goodnesse, and is nat wrooth for noon harm that is doon to hym. [660] The philosophre seith that pacience is thilke vertu that suffreth debonairely alle the outrages of adversitee and every wikked word. This vertu maketh a man lyk to God, and maketh hym Goddes owene

657. *eschawfeth*, chafes.

658. *trefable*, tractable.

659. *is a vertu*, E<sup>3</sup> *it is*, etc.

deere child, as seith Crist ; this vertu disconfiteth thyn enemy, and therfore seith the wise man, "If thou wolt venquysse thyn enemy, lerne to suffre." And thou shalt understonde that man suffreth foure manere of grevances in outward thynges ; agayns the whiche foure he moot have foure manere of paciencies.

The firste grevance is of wikkede wordes ; thilke suffrede Jhesu Crist withouten grucchyng, ful patiently, whan the Jewes despised and repreved hym ful ofte. Suffre thou therfore patiently, for the wise man seith, "If thou stryve with a fool though the fool be wrooth or though he laughe, algate thou shalt have no reste."

[665] That oother grevance outward is to have damage of thy catel. Ther-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently, when he was despoyled of al that he hadde in this lyf, and that nas but hise clothes.

The thridde grevance is a man to have harm in his body. That suffred Crist ful patiently in al his passioun.

The fourthe grevance is in outrageous labour in werkes. Wherefore I seye that folk that maken hir servantz to travaillen to grevously, or out of tyme, as on haly dayes, soothly they do greet synne. Heer-agayns suffred Crist ful patiently and taughte us pience, whan he baar upon his blissed shulder the croys upon which he sholde suffren despitous deeth. Heere may men lerne to be patient, for certes noght only Cristen men been patient for love of Jhesu Crist and for gerdoun of the blisful lyf that is perdur-

able, but certes the olde payens that nevere were Cristene, commendeden and useden the vertu of pacience.

[670] A philosopre upon a tyme that wolde have beten his disciple for his grete trespas for which he was greetly amoeved, and broghte a yerde to scoure the child; and whan this child saugh the yerde, he seyde to his maister, "What thenke ye do?" "I wol bete thee," quod the maister, "for thy correcioun." "Forsothe," quod the child; "ye oghten first correcte youreself, that han lost al youre pacience for the gilt of a child." "Forsothe," quod the maister, al wepynge, "thow seyst sooth; have thow the yerde, my deere sone, and correcte me for myn inpacience." Of pacience comth obedience, thurgh which a man is obedient to Crist and to alle hem to whiche he oghte to been obedient in Crist. [675] And understand wel that obedience is perfit whan that a man dooth gladly and hastily, with good herte, entierly, al that he sholde do. Obedience generally is to perfourne the doctrine of God and of his sovereyns, to whiche hym oghte to ben obeisaunt in alle rightwisnesse.

*Sequitur de Accidia*

After the synne of envye and of ire, now wol I speken of the synne of accidie; for envye blyndeth the herte of man, and ire troubleth a man, and accidie

670. *amoeved*, moved, disturbed.  
*yerde*, stick.  
*scoure* (beat), E *scoure with*.

675. *perfit*, perfect.  
 677. *accidie*, moral sluggishness.

maketh hym hevy, thoughtful and wrawful. Envy and ire maken bitternesse in herte, which bitternesse is mooder of accidie and bynymeth hym the love of alle goodnesse. Thanne is accidie the angwissh of troubled herte, and Seint Augustyn seith, it is anoy of goodnesse and joye of harm. Certes this is a dampnable synne, for it dooth wrong to Jhesu Crist, in as muche as it bynymeth the service that men oghte doon to Crist with alle diligence, as seith Salomon; [680] but accidie dooth no swich diligence. He dooth alle thyng with anoy, and with wrawnesse, slaknesse, and excusacioun, and with ydelnesse, and unlust; for which the book seith, "Acursed be he that dooth the service of God negligently."

Thanne is accidie enemy to everich estaat of man, for certes the estaat of man is in thre maneres. Outher it is thestaat of innocence, as was thestaat of Adam biforn that he fil into synne, in which estaat he was holden to wirche as in heriyng and adowryng of God. Another estaat is estaat of synful men, in which estaat men been holden to laboure in preiynge to God for amendement of hire synnes, and that he wole graunte hem to aysen out of hir synnes. Another estaat is thestaat of grace, in which estaat he is holden to werkes of penitence; and certes to alle thise thynges is accidie enemy and contrarie, for he loveth no bisynesse at al. [685] Now certes this foule swyn,

677. *wrawful*, perverse.678. *bynymeth*, deprives.680. *unlust*, ill-will.682. *wirche*, work.*heriyng*, praising.*adowryng*, H<sup>2</sup> *honouryng*.

accidie, is eek a ful greet enemy to the liflode of the body, for it ne hath no purveaunce agayn temporeel necessitee, for it forsluweth and forsluggeth, and destroyeth alle goodes temporeles by recchelesnesse.

The fourthe thyng is, that accidie is lyk to hem that been in the peyne of helle, by-cause of hir slouthe and of hire hevynesse; for they that been dampned been so bounde that they ne may neither wel do, ne wel thynke. Of accidie comth first, that a man is anoyed and encombred for to doon any goodnesse, and maketh that God hath abhomynacion of swich accidie, as seith Seint John.

Now cometh slouthe, that wol nat suffre noon hardnesse ne no penaunce, for soothly, slouth is so tendre and so delicat, as seith Salomon, that he wol nat suffre noon hardnesse, ne penaunce, and therfore he shendeth al that he dooth. Agayns this rothenerted synne of accidie and slouthe sholde men exercise hemself to doon goode werkes, and manly and vertuously cacchen corage wel to doon, thynkyng that oure Lord Jhesu Crist quiteth every good dede, be it never so lite. [690] Usage of labour is a greet thyng, for it maketh, as seith Seint Bernard, the laborer to have stronge armes, and harde synwes, and slouthe maketh hem feble and tendre. Thanne comth drede to bigynne to werke anye goode werkes; for certes he that is enclined to synne hym thynketh

685. *liflode*, livelihood.

*purveaunce*, providence.

*forsluweth*, etc., is slothful  
and sluggish to excess.

687. *as seith Seint John*, om. E<sup>a</sup>.

688. *shendeth*, spoils.

690. *synwes*, sinews.

it is so greet an emprise for to undertake to doon werkes of goodnesse, and casteth in his herte that the circumstaunces of goodnesse been so grevouse and so chargeaunt for to suffre, that he dar nat undertake to do werkes of goodnesse, as seith Seint Gregorie.

Now comth wanhope, that is despeir of the mercy of God, that comth somtyme of to muche outrageous sorwe, and somtyme of to muche drede, ymaginyng that he hath doon so muche synne that it wol nat availlen hym, though he wolde repenten hym and forsake synne; thurgh which despeir or drede he abaundoneth al his herte to every maner synne, as seith Seint Augustin. [695] Which dampnable synne, if that it continue unto his ende, it is cleped synnyng in the Hooly Goost. This horrible synne is so perilous, that he that is despeired, ther nys no felonye ne no synne that he douteth for to do, as sheweth wel by Judas.

Certes, aboven alle synnes thanne is this synne moost displesant to Crist and moost adversarie.

Soothly, he that despeireth hym is lyke the coward champioun recreant that seith "recreaunt" withoute nede. Alas! alas! nedeles is he recreaunt and nedeles despeired. Certes, the mercy of God is evere redy to the penitent, and is aboven alle hise werkes. [700] Allas! kan a man nat bithynke hym on the gospel of Seint Luc xv., where as Crist seith, that as

692. *chargeaunt*, burden-some.

696. *douteth*, hesitates.

698. *that seith . . . is he recreaunt*, om. E.

699. *the penitent*, E every penitent.



wel shal ther be joye in hevene upon a synful man that dooth penitence, than upon nynety and nyne rightful men that nevere ne dede synne, ne neden no penitence.

Looke forther in the same gospel, the joye and the feeste of the goode man that hadde lost his sone, whan his sone with repentaunce was retourned to his fader. Kan they nat remembren hem eek, that as seith Seint Luc xxiii., how that the theef that was hanged bisyde Jhesu Crist seyde, "Lord, remembre of me, whan thou comest into thy regne." "Forsothe," seyde Crist, "I seye to thee, to day shaltow been with me in paradys." Certes, ther is noon so horrible synne of man that it ne may in his lyf be destroyed by penitence, thurgh vertu of the passion and of the deeth of Crist. [705] Allas! what nedeth man thanne to been despeired, sith that his mercy so redy is and large? Axe and have.

Thanne cometh sompnolence, that is sloggy slombrynge, which maketh a man be hevy and dul in body and in soule. And this synne comth of slouth. And certes, the tyme that by wey of resoun men sholde nat slepe, that is by the morwe, but if ther were cause resonable, for soothly the morwe tyde is moost covenable a man to seye hise preyeres, and for to thynken on God, and for to honoure God, and to geven almesse to the poure, that first cometh in the name of Crist. Lo, what seith Salomon? "Whoso

700. *nynety and nyne*, E<sup>5</sup> 90  
and 19.

703. *I seye to thee*, om. H<sup>4</sup>.  
705. *Axe*, ask.

wolde by the morwe awaken and seke me, he shal fynde." [710] Thanne cometh negligence or reccheleesnesse, that rekketh of no thyng; and how that ignoraunce be mooder of alle harm, certes negligence is the norice. Negligence ne dooth no fors, whan he shal doon a thyng, wheither he do it weel or baddely.

Of the remedie of thise two synnes, as seith the wise man, that he that dredeth God he spareth nat to doon that him oghte doon, and he that loveth God he wol doon diligence to plesse God by hise werkes and abaundone hymself with al his myght wel for to doon. Thanne comth ydelnesse that is the gate of alle harmes. An ydel man is lyk to a place that hath no walles; the develes may entre on every syde and sheten at hym at discover, by temptacion on every syde. [715] This ydelnesse is the thurrok of alle wikked and vileyns thoghtes and of alle jangles, truffles, and of alle ordure. Certes, the hevene is geven to hem that wol labouren, and nat to ydel folk. Eek David seith, that they ne been nat in the labour of men, ne they shul nat been whipped with men, that is to seyn in purgatorie; certes thanne semeth it they shul be tormented with the devel in helle, but if they doon penitence.

Thanne comth the synne that men clepen *tarditas*, as whan a man is to laterede or tarynge er he wole turne to God, and certes that is a greet folie. He is

715. *thurrok*, sink.  
*jangles*, etc., chatter,  
trifles and filth.

718. *tarditas*, slowness.  
*laterede*, slow.

lyk to hym that falleth in the dych, and wol nat arise. And this vice comth of a fals hope, that he thynketh that he shal lyve longe; but that hope faileth ful ofte.

[720] Thanne comth lachesse, that is he that whan he biginneth any good werk, anon he shal forleten it, and stynten, as doon they that han any wight to governe and ne taken of hym namoore kepe anon as they fynden any contrarie or any anoy. Thise been the newe sheepherdes that leten hir sheepe wityngly go renne to the wolf, that is in the breres, or do no fors of hir owene governaunce. Of this comth poverté and destruccioun, bothe of spiritueel and temporeel thynges. Thanne comth a manere cooldnesse, that freseth al the herte of a man. Thanne comth un-devocioun, thurgh which a man is blent, as seith Seint Bernard, and hath swich langour in soule, that he may neither rede ne singe in hooly chirche, ne heere, ne thynke of no devocioun, ne travaille with hise handes in no good werk, that it nys hym unsavory and al apalled. Thanne wexeth he slough and slombry, and soone wol be wrooth, and soone is enclyned to hate and to envye. [725] Thanne comth the synne of worldly sorwe, which as is cleped *tristitia*, that sleeth man, as Seint Paul seith. For certes, swich sorwe werketh to the deeth of the soule and of the body also, for ther-of comth that a man is anoyed of his owene lif; wherfore swich sorwe shorteth ful

718. *dych*, ditch.

720. *lachesse*, slackness, negligence.

*forleten*, give over.

720. *stynten*, stop.

721. *leten*, leave.

723. *blent*, blinded.

*apalled*, enfeebled.

ofte the lif of man, er that his tyme be come by wey of kynde.

*Remedium contra peccatum Accidie*

Agayns this horrible synne of accidie, and the branches of the same, ther is a vertu that is called *fortitudo*, or strengthe ; that is, an affecciou thurgh which a man despiseth anoyouse thinges. This vertu is so myghty and so vigerous that it dar withstonde myghtily, and wisely kepen hym self fro perils that been wikked, and wrastle agayn the assautes of the devel ; [730] for it enhaunceth and enforceth the soule, right as accidie abateth it, and maketh it fieble ; for this *fortitudo* may endure by long suffraunce the travailles that been covenable.

This vertu hath manye speces, and the firste is cleped magnanimitee, that is to seyn greet corage ; for certes ther bihoveth greet corage agains accidie lest that it ne swolwe the soule by the synne of sorwe, or destroye it by wanhope. This vertu maketh folk to undertake harde thynges and grevouse thynges by hir owene wil, wisely and resonably. And for as muchel as the devel fighteth agayns a man moore by queyntise and by sleighte than by strengthe, therfore men shal withstonden hym by wit and by resoun and by discrecioun.

Thanne arn ther the vertues of feith and hope in

728. *anoyouse*, H<sup>4</sup> *alle noyous*.

729. *assaules*, assaults.

731. *magnanimitee*, E *magnificence*.

733. *queyntise*, contriv-  
ance.

734. *arn*, are.

God, and in hise seintes, to acheve and accomplice the goode werkes, in the whiche he purposeth fermely to continue. [735] Thanne comth seuretee, or sikernessee, and that is whan a man ne douteth no travaille in tyme comynge of the goode werkes that a man hath bigonne. Thanne comth magnificence, that is to seyn whan a man dooth and perfourneth grete werkes of goodnesse ; and that is the ende why that men sholde do goode werkes ; for in the acomplissynge of grete goode werkes lith the grete gerdoun. Thanne is ther constaunce, that is stablenesse of corage ; and this sholde been in herte by stedefast feith, and in mouth, and in berynge, and in chiere, and in dede. Eke ther been mo speciale remedies agains accidie in diverse werkes, and in consideracioun of the peynes of helle, and of the joyes of hevene, and in trust of the grace of the Holy Goost, that wole geve hym myght to perfourne his goode entente.

*Sequitur de Avaricia*

After accidie wol I speke of avarice and of coveitise, of which synne seith Seint Paule that the roote of alle harmes is coveitise. *Ad Thimotheum* vi. [740] For soothly, whan the herte of a man is confounded in it self, and troubled, and that the soule hath lost the confort of God, thanne seketh he an ydel solas of worldly thynges.

Avarice, after the descripcion of Seint Augustyn, is

likerousnesse in herte to have erthely thynges. Som oother folk seyn that avarice is for to purchacen manye erthely thynges, and no thyng geve to hem that han nede. And understood that avarice ne stant nat oonly in lond ne catel, but somtyme in science and in glorie, and in every manere of outrageous thyng is avarice and coveitise.

And the difference bitwixe avarice and coveitise is this; coveitise is for to coveite swiche thynges as thou hast nat, and avarice is for to withholde and kepe swiche thynges as thou hast withoute rightful nede. [745] Soothly this avarice is a synne that is ful dampnable, for al hooly writ curseth it, and speketh agayns that vice, for it dooth wrong to Jhesu Crist; for it bireveth hym the love that men to hym owen, and turneth it bakward agayns alle resoun, and maketh that the avaricious man hath moore hope in his catel than in Jhesu Crist, and dooth moore observance in keypyng of his tresor than he dooth to service of Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith Seint Paul, *ad Ephe-sois* v., that an avaricious man is the thraldom of ydolatrie.

What difference is betwixe an ydolastre and an avaricious man? but that any ydolastre peraventure ne hath but o mawmet or two and the avaricious man hath manye; for certes, every floryn in his cofre is his mawmet. [750] And certes, the synne of mawmet-

741. *likerousnesse*, craving.

748. *is the thraldom*, Pet.<sup>2</sup> *is thral*.

749. *ydolastre*, idolater.

*mawmet*, Mahomet, idol.

trie is the firste thyng that God deffended in the ten comaundmentz, as bereth witnesse *Exodi* capitulo xx. "Thou shalt have no false goddes bifore me, ne thou shalt make to thee no grave thyng." Thus is an avaricious man that loveth his tresor biforn God an ydolastre, thurgh this cursed synne of avarice.

Of coveitise comen thise harde lordshipes thurgh whiche men been distreyned by taylages, custumes, and cariages, moore than hire duetee or resoun is; and eek they taken of hire bonde-men amercimentz, whiche myghten moore resonably ben cleped extorcion than amercimentz. Of whiche amercimentz and raunsonynge of bondemen somme lordes stywardes seyn that it is rightful, for as muche as a cherl hath no temporeel thyng that it ne is his lordes, as they seyn; but certes thise lordshipes doon wrong that bireven hire bonde folk thynges that they nevere gave hem. *Augustinus de Civitate Dei*, libro ix. [755] Sooth is that the condicioun of thraldom and the firste cause of thraldom is for synne. *Genesis* ix.

Thus may ye seen that the gilt disserveth thraldom, but nat nature; wherfore thise lordes ne sholde nat muche glorifien hem in hir lordshipes, sith that by natureel condicioun they been nat lordes of thralles, but that thraldom comth first by the desert of synne. And forther-over ther as the lawe seith that temporeel

750. *the firste thyng*, the 1st and 2nd commandments were reckoned by the Roman Church as one, the 10th being divided.

752. *distreyned*, etc., vexed by taxes, dues, and "corvées."

752. *amerciments*, fines.

755. *for synne*, H om. *for*.

goodes of boonde folk been the goodes of hir lordshipes, ye, that is for to understonde, the goodes of the emperour, to deffenden hem in hir right, but nat for to robben hem ne reven hem. And therfore seith Seneca, "Thy prudence sholde lyve benignely with thy thralles; [760] thilke that thou clepest thy thralles been Goddes peple, for humble folk been Cristes freendes, they been contubernyal with the Lord."

Thynk eek that of swich seed as cherles spryngeth, of swich seed spryngen lordes. As wel may the cherl be saved as the lord; the same deeth that take the cherl, swich deeth taketh the lord; wherfore I rede, do right so with thy cherl as thou woldest that thy Lord dide with thee if thou were in his plit. Every synful man is a cherl to synne. I rede thee, certes, that thou, lord, werke in swiche wise with thy cherles that they rather love thee than drede. I woot wel ther is degree above degree, as reson is, and skile it is that men do hir devoir ther as it is due; but certes, extorcions and despit of youre underlynges is dampnable.

[765] And forther-over understood wel that thise conquerours, or tirauntz, maken ful ofte thralles of hem that been born of as roial blood as been they that hem conqueren. This name of thraldom was nevere erst kowth, til that Noe seyde that his sone

760. *contubernyal*, dwellers in the same tent, fellow-soldiers.

762. *plit*, plight.

764. *skile*, reason.

764. *devoir*, duty.

765. *thise*, om. H<sup>6</sup>.

*thraldom*, H<sup>3</sup> *cherldom*.

766. *kowth*, known.



Canaan sholde be thral to hise bretheren for his synne. What seye we thanne of hem that pilen and doon extorcions in hooly chirche? Certes, the swerd that men geven first to a knyght whan he is newe dubbed signifieth that he sholde deffenden hooly chirche, and nat robben it ne pilen it, and who so dooth is traitour to Crist. And, as seith Seint Augustyn, they been the develes wolves that stranglen the sheepe of Jhesu Crist, and doon worse than wolves, for, soothly, whan the wolf hath ful his wombe he stynteth to strangle sheepe, but soothly, the pilours and destroyours of Goddes hooly chirche ne do nat so, for they ne stynte nevere to pile.

[770] Now, as I have seyde, sith so is that synne was first cause of thraldom, thanne is it thus, that thilke tyme that al this world was in synne, thanne was al this world in thraldom and subjeccioun; but certes, sith the time of grace cam, God ordeyned that som folk sholde be moore heigh in estaat and in degree, and som folk moore lough, and that everich sholde be served in his estaat and his degree, and therefore in somme contrees ther they byen thralles, whan they han turned hem to the feith, they maken hire thralles free out of thraldom. And therefore certes the lord oweth to his man that the man oweth to his lord. The pope calleth hymself servaunt of the servauntz of God; but for-as-muche as the estaat of hooly chirche

767. *pilen*, rob.

769. *wombe*, belly.

of Goddes hooly chirche,

H of the goodes, etc.; the other MSS. of goodes, of good, of holy chirches godes.

ne myghte nat han be, ne the commune profit myghte nat han be kept, ne pees and reste in erthe, but if God hadde ordeyned that som men hadde hyer degree and som men lower, therfore was sovereyntee ordeyned to kepe and mayntene and deffenden hire underlynges or hire subgetz in resoun as ferforth as it lith in hire power, and nat to destroyen hem ne confounde.

[775] Wherfore I seye, that thilke lordes that been lyk wolves that devouren the possessiouns or the catel of poure folk wrongfully, withouten mercy or mesure, they shul receyven, by the same mesure that they han mesured to poure folk, the mercy of Jhesu Crist, but if it be amended.

Now comth deceite bitwixe marchaunt and marchaunt. And thou shalt understonde that marchandise is in manye maneres; that oon is bodily, and that oother is goostly, that oon is honeste and leveful, and that oother is deshoneste and unleveful. Of thilke bodily marchandise that is leveful and honeste is this, that there as God hath ordeyned that a regne or a contree is suffisaunt to hym-self, thanne is it honeste and leveful that of habundaunce of this contree that men helpe another contree that is moore nedy; and therfore ther moote been marchantz to bryngen fro that o contree to that oother hire marchandises.

[780] That oother marchandise, that men haunten with fraude and trecherie and deceite, with lesynges and false othes, is cursed and dampnable.

Espiritueel marchandise is proprely symonye, that

777. *leveful*, lawful.

780. *haunten*, practise.

is, ententif desir to byen thyng espiritueel, that is thyng that aperteneth to the seintuarie of God, and to cure of the soule. This desir, if so be that a man do his diligence to parfournen it, al be it that his desir ne take noon effect, yet is it to hym a deedly synne, and if he be ordred he is irreguleer. Certes symonye is cleped of Simon Magus, that wolde han boght for temporeel catel the gifte that God hadde geven by the Hooly Goost to Seint Peter and to the Apostles. And therfore understood that bothe he that selleth and he that beyeth thynges espirituels been cleped symonyals, be it by catel, be it by procuryng, or by fleshly preyere of hise freendes, fleshly freendes, or espiritueel freendes. [785] Fleshly in two maneres; as by kynrede, or othere freendes; soothly, if they praye for hym that is nat worthy and able, it is symonye, if he take the benefice; and if he be worthy and able ther nys noon.

That oother manere is whan a man or womman preyen for folk to avauncen hem oonly for wikked fleshly affeccoun that they have unto the persone, and that is foul symonye. But certes in service for which men geven thynges espirituels unto hir servantz it moot be understonde that the service moot been honeste, and elles nat; and eek that it be withouten bargaynyng, and that the persone be able; for, as seith Seint Damasio, "Alle the synnes of the world at regard of this synne arn as thyng of noght, for it is the gretteste synne that may be, after the

781. *seintuarie*, sanctuary.782. *ordred*, ordained.

synne of Lucifer and Antecrist;" for by this synne God forleseth the chirche and the soule that he boghte with his precious blood by hem that geven chirches to hem that been nat digne, [790] for they putten in theves that stelen the soules of Jhesu Crist and destroyed his patrimoyne. By swiche undigne preestes and curates han lewed men the lasse reverence of the sacramentz of hooly chirche, and swiche geveres of chirches putten out the children of Crist, and putten into the chirche the develes owene sone. They sellen the soules that lambes sholde kepen, to the wolf that strangleth hem; and therefore, shul they nevere han part of the pasture of lambes, that is the blisse of hevene.

Now comth hasardrie, with hise apurtenaunces, as tables and rafes, of which comth deceite, false othes, chidynges, and alle ravynes, blasphemynge and reneyng of God, and hate of hise neighebores, wast of goodes, mysspendynge of tyme, and somtyme manslaughter. Certes, hasardours ne mowe nat been withouten greet synne whil thay haunte that crafte. [795] Of avarice comen eek lesynges, thefte, fals witnesse, and false othes; and ye shul understonde that thise been grete synnes, and expres agayn the comaundementz of God, as I have seyde. Fals witnesse is in word and eek in dede. In word, as for to bireve thy neighebores goode name by thy fals witnessyng, or bireven hym his catel or his heri-

793. *ravynes*, rapines.  
*reneyng*, denying.

794. *whil thay haunte that crafte*,  
om. E<sup>3</sup>.

tage by thy fals witnessyng, whan thou for ire, or for meede, or for envye, berest fals witesse, or accusest hym, or excusest hym, by thy fals witesse, or elles excusest thyself falsly. Ware yow questemongeres and notaries. Certes, for fals witnessyng was Susanna in ful gret sorwe and peyne, and many another mo. The synne of thefte is eek expres agayns Goddes heeste, and in two maneres, corporeel or espiritueel. Corporel, as for to take thy neighbores catel agayn his wyl, be it by force or by sleighte, be it by met or by mesure, [800] by stelyng eek of false enditementz upon hym, and in borwyng of thy neighbores catel, in entente nevere to payen it agayn, and semblable thynges.

Espiritueel thefte is sacrilege, that is to seyn, hurtynge of hooly thynges, or of thynges sacred to Crist, in two maneres; by reson of the hooly place, as chirches or chirche-hawes, for which every vileyns synne that men doon in swiche places may be cleped sacrilege, or every violence in the semblable places.

Also they that withdrawn falsly the rightes that longen to hooly chirche. And pleylnly and generally, sacrilege is to reven hooly thyng fro hooly place, or unhooly thyng out of hooly place, or hooly thyng out of unhooly place.

797. *questemongeres*, holders of inquests; Fr. "avocat."

799. *Corporel*, om. E<sup>5</sup>.  
*met* or *mesure*, both words mean measure.

800. *it agayn*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

*semblable*, similar.

801. *chirche - hawes*, church - yards.

*Relevacio contra peccatum Avaricie*

Now shul ye understonde that the releevynge of avarice is misericorde and pitee largely taken. And men myghten axe why that misericorde and pitee is releevynge of avarice. [805] Certes, the avaricious man sheweth no pitee ne misericorde to the nedeful man, for he deliteth hym in the keypyng of his tresor and nat in the rescowyng ne releevynge of his evene Cristene; and therfore speke I first of misericorde.

Thanne is misericorde, as seith the philosophre, a vertu by which the corage of man is stired by the myse of hym that is mysed; upon which misericorde folweth pitee in parfournynge of charitable werkes of misericorde. And certes, thise thynges moeven a man to misericorde, of Jhesu Crist, that he gaf hymself for oure gilt, and suffred deeth for misericorde, and forgaf us oure originale synnes, and therby relessed us fro the peynes of helle, and amenused the peynes of purgatorie by penitence, and geveth grace wel to do, and atte laste the blisse of hevene. [810] The spes of misericorde been, as for to lene and for to geve, and to forgiven and relesse, and for to han pitee in herte, and compassioun of the meschief of his evene Cristene, and eek to chastise there as nede is.

Another manere of remedie agayns avarice is resonable largesse, but soothly heere bihoveth the

805. *rescowyng*, rescuing.  
809. *amenused*, lessened.

809. *blisse*, H<sup>b</sup> *joye*.  
810. *lene*, lend.

consideracioun of the grace of Jhesu Crist and of hise temporeel goodes, and eek of the goodes perdurables that Crist gaf to us, and to han remembrance of the deeth that he shal receyve, he noot whanne, where, ne how; and eek that he shal forgon al that he hath, save oonly that he hath despended in goode werkes.

But, for as muche as som folk been unmesurable, men oughten eschue fool largesse that men clepen wast. Certes, he that is fool large ne geveth nat his catel, but he leseth his catel. Soothly what thyng that he geveth for veyne glorie, as to mynstrals and to folk, for to beren his renoun in the world, he hath synne ther-of, and noon almesse. [815] Certes he leseth foule his good that ne seketh with the gifte of his good no thyng but synne. He is lyk to an hors that seketh rather to drynken drovy or trouble water, than for to drynken water of the clere welle. And for as muchel as they geven ther as they sholde nat geven, to hem aperteneth thilke malisoun that Crist shal geven at the day of doome to hem that shullen been dampned.

*Sequitur de Gulā*

After avarice comth glotonye, which is expres eek agayn the comandement of God. Glotonye is unmesurable appetit to ete or to drynke, or elles to doon ynogh to the unmesurable appetit and desordeynee

813. *unmesurable*, immoderate.

814. *almesse*, alms.

816. *drovy*, turbid.

818. *desordeynee*, disorderly.

coveitise to eten or to drynke. This synne corrupted al this world, as is wel shewed in the synne of Adam and of Eve. Looke, eek, what seith Seint Paul of glotonye. [820] "Manye," seith Seint Paul, "goon of whiche I have ofte seyde to yow, and now I seye it wepyng, that been the enemys of the croys of Crist, of whiche the ende is deeth, and of whiche hire wombe is hire God, and hire glorie in confusioun of hem that so devouren erthely thynges." He that is usaunt to this synne of glotonye he ne may no synne withstonde; he moot been in servage of alle vices, for it is the develes hoord ther he hideth hym and resteth.

This synne hath manye spes. The firste is dronkenesse, that is the horrible sepulture of mannes resoun, and therefore whan a man is drunken he hath lost his resoun, and this is deedly synne. But soothly, whan that a man is nat wont to strong drynke, and peraventure ne knoweth nat the strengthe of the drynke, or hath feblesse in his heed, or hath travailed, thurgh which he drynketh the moore, al be he sodeynly caught with drynke, it is no deedly synne, but venyal. The seconde spece of glotonye is, that the spirit of a man wexeth al trouble, for dronkenesse bireveth hym the discrecioun of his wit. [825] The thridde spece of glotonye is whan a man devoureth his mete, and hath no rightful manere of etynge. The fourth is, whan thurgh the grete habundaunce of his mete, the humours in his body been destempred. The fifte

819. *corrupted*, corrupted.820. *devouren*, H<sup>3</sup> *saveren*.



is forgetelnesse by to muchel drynkyng, for which somtyme a man forgeteth er the morwe what he dide at even, or on the nyght biforn.

In oother manere been distinct the speses of glotony, after Seint Gregorie. The firste is for to ete biforn tyme to ete; the seconde is whan a man get hym to delicaat mete or drynke; the thridde is whan men taken to muche over mesure; the fourthe is curiositee with greet entente to maken and apparailen his mete; the fifthe is for to eten to gredily. [830] Thise been the fyve fyngres of the develes hand, by whiche he draweth folk to synne.

*Remedium contra peccatum Gule*

Agayns glotonye is the remedie abstinence, as seith Galien; but that holde I nat meritorie, if he do it oonly for the heele of his body. Seint Augustyn wole that abstinence be doon for vertu and with pacience. "Abstinence," he seith, "is litel worth, but if a man have good wil ther-to, and but it be enforced by pacience and by charitee, and that men doon it for Godes sake, and in hope to have the blisse of hevene."

The felawes of abstinence been attemperaunce, that holdeth the meene in alle thynges; eek shame, that eschueth alle deshonestee; suffisance, that seketh no riche metes ne drynkes, ne dooth no fors of to

827. *forgetelnesse*, forgetfulness.

828. *get*, getteth.

829. *curiositee*, fastidiousness.  
*apparailen*, prepare.

831. *heelee*, health.

outrageous apparailynge of mete ; mesure also, that restreyneth by resoun the deslavee appetit of etynge ; sobrenesse also, that restreyneth the outrage of drynke ; sparynge also, that restreyneth [835] the delicaat ese to sitte longe at his mete and softly, wherfore som folk stonden, of hir owene wyl, to eten at the lasse leyser.

*Sequitur de Luxuria*

After glotonye thanne comth lecherie, for thise two synnes been so ny cosyns, that ofte tyme they wol nat departe. God woot this synne is ful displeaunt thyng to God, for he seyde hymself, "Do no lecherie ;" and therefore he putte grete peynes agayns this synne in the olde lawe. If womman thral were taken in this synne, she sholde be beten with staves to the deeth ; and if she were a gentil womman, she sholde be slayn with stones ; and if she were a bisshoppes doghter, she sholde been brent by Goddes comandement. Forther-over, by the synne of lecherie God dreynte al the world at the diluge, and after that he brente five citees with thonder leyt and sank hem into helle.

[840] Now lat us speke thanne of thilke stynkyng synne of lecherie that men clepe avowtrie of wedded folk ; that is to seyn, if that oon of hem be wedded, or elles bothe. Seint John seith that avowtiers shullen been in helle in a stank brennyng of fyr and

834. *deslavee*, unbridled.

836. *departe*, separate.

839. *by the synne*, i.e. on account of.

839. *dreynte*, drowned.

*leyt*, lightning, flame.

840. *avowtrie*, adultery.

841. *stank* (stench), H *water*.

of brymston. In fyr for lecherie, in brymston for the stynk of hire ordure. Certes, the brekyng of this sacrament is an horrible thyng; it was maked of God hymself in paradys, and confermed by Jhesu Crist, as witnesseth Seint Mathew in the gospel: "A man shal lete fader and mooder and taken hym to his wif, and they shullen be two in o flessch." This sacrament bitokneth the knyttyng togidre of Crist and of hooly chirche. And nat oonly that God forbad avowtrie in dede, but eek he comanded that thou sholdest nat coveite thy neighebores wyf. [845] In this heeste, seith Seint Augustyn, is forboden alle manere coveitise to doon lecherie. Lo, what seith Seint Mathew in the gospel; that who so seeth a womman to coveitise of his lust, he hath doon lecherie with hire in his herte. Heere may ye seen that nat oonly the dede of this synne is forboden, but eek the desir to doon that synne.

This cursed synne anyeth grevousliche hem that it haunten. And first to hire soule, for he obligeth it to synne and to peyne of deeth that is perdurable. Unto the body anyeth it grevously also, for it dreyeth hym, and wasteth, and shenteth hym, and of his blood he maketh sacrifice to the feend of helle; it wasteth his catel and his substaunce. And certes if it be a foul thyng a man to waste his catel on wommen, yet is it a fouler thyng whan that for swich ordure wommen dispenden upon men hir catel and sub-

841. *In fyr for lecherie, in brymston*, om. E<sup>3</sup>.

847. *haunten*, practise.

staunce. [850] This synne, as seith the prophete, bireveth man and womman hir goode fame, and al hire honour, and it is ful plesaunt to the devel; for ther-by wynneth he the mooste partie of this world; and, right as a marchant deliteth hym moost in chaffare that he hath moost advantage of right, so deliteth the fend in this ordure.

This is that oother hand of the devel with five fynGRES to cacche the peple to his vileynye. The firste fynger is the fool lookynge of the fool womman, and of the fool man, that sleeth right as the basilicok sleeth folk by the venym of his sighte; for the coveitise of eyen folweth the coveitise of the herte. The seconde fynger is the vileyns touchynge in wikkede manere; and therfore, seith Salomon that whoso toucheth and handleth a womman he fareth lyk hym that handleth the scorioun that styngeth and sodeynly sleeth thurgh his envenymynge; as whoso toucheth warm pych, it shent hise fynGRES. [855] The thridde is foule wordes, that fareth lyk fyr, that right anon brenneth the herte. The fourthe fynger is the kysynge; and trewely he were a greet fool that wolde kisse the mouth of a brennyng ovene, or of a fourneys. And moore fooles been they that kissen in vileynye, for that mouth is the mouth of helle; and namely thise olde dotardes holours, yet wol they kisse though they may nat do, and smatre hem. Certes, they been lyk to houndes, for an hound whan he

851. *chaffare*, bargains.853. *basilicok*, basilisk.854. *shent*, defiles.857. *holours*, lechers.

comth by the roser, or by othere beautees, though he may nat pisse, yet wole he heve up his leg and make a contenaunce to pisse. And for that many man weneth that he may nat synne, for no likerousnesse that he dooth with his wyf, certes, that opinioun is fals; God woot a man may sleen hymself with his owene knyf and make hymselfen dronken of his owene tonne. [860] Certes, be it wyf, be it child, or any worldly thyng that he loveth biforn God, it is his mawmet, and he is an ydolastre. Man sholde loven his wyf by discrecioun, patiently and atempely, and thanne is she as though it were his suster.

The fifthe fynger of the develes hand is the stynkyng dede of lecherie. Certes, the five fyngres of glotonie the feend put in the wombe of a man, and with hise five fyngres of lecherie he gripeth hym by the reynes for to throwen hym into the fourneys of helle, ther as they shul han the fyr and the wormes that evere shul lasten, and wepyng and wailynge, sharpe hunger and thirst, and grymnesse of develes that shullen al to-trede hem withouten respit and withouten ende.

[865] Of lecherie, as I seyde, sourden diverse speces, as fornicacioun that is bitwixe man and womman that been nat married, and this is deedly synne and agayns nature. Al that is enemy and destruccioun to nature is agayns nature. *Parfay*, the

859. *tonne*, cask.860. *mawmet*, idol.864. *grymnesse*, H<sup>1</sup> *grislines*.864. *to-trede* (tread down), H  
*to-tere*.865. *sourden*, spring.

resoun of a man telleth eek hym wel that it is deedly synne, for as muche as God forbad leccherie. And Seint Paul geveth hem the regne that nys dewe to no wight but to hem that doon deedly synne. Another synne of leccherie is to bireve a mayden of hir maydenhede, for he that so dooth, certes, he casteth a mayden out of the hyste degree that is in this present lif, and bireveth hire thilke precious fruyt that the book clepeth the "hundred fruyt." I ne kan seye it noon oother weyes in Englissh, but in Latyn it highte *Centesimus fructus*. [870] Certes, he that so dooth is cause of manye damages and vileynyes, mo than any man kan rekene, right as he somtyme is cause of alle damages that beestes don in the feeld that breketh the hegge or the closure, thurgh which he destroyeth that may nat been restooored. For certes, namoore may maydenhede be restooored than an arm that is smyten fro the body may retourne agayn to wexe. She may have mercy; this woot I wel, if she do penitence, but nevere shal it be that she nas corrupt.

And, al be it so that I have spoken somewhat of avowtrie, it is good to shewen mo perils that longen to avowtrie, for to eschue that foule synne. Avowtrie in Latyn is for to seyn, approchyng of oother mannes bed, thurgh which tho that whilom weren o flessch abawndone hir bodyes to othere persones. [875] Of this synne, as seith the wise man, folwen manye harmes. First, brekyng of feith; and certes, in

869. *fructus*, H adds *secundum Jeronimum contra Jovinianum*.

871. *to wexe*, to grow.

feith is the keye of Cristendom, and whan that feith is broken and lorn, soothly, Cristendom stant veyn and withouten fruyt. This synne is eek a thefte, for thefte generally is for to reve a wight his thyng agayns his wille. Certes this is the fouleste thefte that may be, whan a womman steleth hir body from hir hous-bonde and geveth it to hire holour to defoulen hire, and steleth hir soule fro Crist, and geveth it to the devel. This is a fouler thefte than for to breke a chirche and stele the chalice, for thise avowtiers breken the temple of God, spiritually, and stelen the vessel of grace, that is the body and the soule, for which Crist shal destroyen hem, as seith Seint Paul.

[880] Soothly of this thefte douted gretly Joseph, whan that his lordes wyf preyed hym of vileynye, whan he seyde, "Lo, my lady, how my lord hath take to me under my warde al that he hath in this world, ne no thyng of hise thynges is out of my power, but oonly ye, that been his wyf, and how sholde I thanne do this wikkednesse and synne so horrible agayns God, and agayns my lord? God it forbeede!" Allas! al to litel is swich trouthe now y-founde.

The thridde harm is the filthe thurgh which they breken the comandement of God and defoulen the auctour of matrimoyne, that is, Crist. For certes, in so muche as the sacrement of mariage is so noble and so digne, so muche is it gretter synne for to breken it; for God made mariage in paradys, in the estaat of innocence, to multiplie mankynde to the service of

God ; and therefore is the brekyngge moore grevous ; of which brekyngge comen false heires ofte tyme, that wrongfully ocupien folkes heritages. And therefore wol Crist putte hem out of the regne of hevene that is heritage to goode folk. [885] Of this brekyngge comth eek ofte tyme that folk unwar wedden or synnen with hire owene kynrede, and namely thilke harlottes that haunten bordels of thise fool wommen, that mowe be likned to a commune gonge, where as men purgen hire ordure.

What seye we eek of putours that lyven by the horrible synne of putrie and constreyne wommen to yelden to hem a certeyn rente of hire bodily puterie, —ye, somtyme of his owene wyf or his child, as doon this bawdes. Certes, thise been cursede synnes. Understood eek, that avowtrie is set gladly in the ten comandementz bitwixe thefte and manslaughter, for it is the gretteste thefte that may be, for it is thefte of body and of soule ; and it is lyk to homycide, for it kerveth atwo and breketh atwo hem that first were maked o flessch, and therefore by the olde lawe of God they sholde be slayn. But nathelees, by the lawe of Jhesu Crist, that is lawe of pitee, whan he seyde to the womman that was founden in avowtrie, and sholde han been slayn with stones after the wyl of the Jewes, as was hir lawe, "Go," quod Jhesu Crist, "and have namoore wyl to synne," or wille namoore to do synne.

884. *folkes*, H<sup>4</sup> *mennes*, other *mennes*.

885. *bordels*, brothels.

885. *gonge*, privy.

886. *putours*, whoremongers.



[890] Soothly, the vengeance of avowtrie is awarded to the peynes of helle, but if so be that it be destourbed by penitence.

Yet been ther mo speses of this cursed synne, as whan that oon of hem is religious, or elles bothe, or of folk that been entred into ordre, as subdekne, or preest, or hospitaliers, and evere the hyer that he is in ordre the gretter is the synne. The thynges that gretly agreggen hire synne is the brekyng of hire avow of chastitee whan they receyved the ordre. And forther-over, sooth is, that hooly ordre is chief of al the tresorie of God, and his especial signe and mark of chastitee, to shewe that they been joyned to chastitee which that is moost precious lyf that is. And thise ordred folk been specially tited to God, and of the special meignee of God, for which, whan they doon deedly synne, they been the special traytours of God and of his peple, for they lyven of the peple to preye for the peple, and while they been suche traytours her preyers availle nat to the peple.

[895] Preestes been aungeles as by the dignitee of hir mysterye, but forsothe Seint Paul seith, that Sathanas transformeth hym in an aungel of light. Soothly, the preest that haunteth deedly synne, he may be likned to the aungel of derknesse transformed in the aungel of light; he semeth aungel of light, but forsothe he is aungel of derknesse. Swiche preestes

891. *religious*, i.e. a member  
of a religious order.  
*ordre*, holy orders.

892. *agreggen*, aggravate.

894. *tited*, devoted.  
*meignee*, household.  
*to preye for . . . to the*  
*peple*, om. E.

been the sones of Helie, as sheweth in the book of Kynges, that they weren the sones of Belial, that is the devel. "Belial" is to seyn withouten juge, and so faren they; hem thynketh they been free and han no juge, namoore than hath a free bole, that taketh which cow that hym liketh in the town. So faren they by wommen, for right as a free bole is ynough for al a toun, right so is a wikked preest corrupcion ynough for al a parisshe, or for al a contree.

[900] Thise preestes, as seith the book, ne konne nat the myserie of preesthode to the peple, ne God ne knowe they nat; they ne holde hem nat apayd, as seith the book, of soden flessh that was to hem offred, but they tooke by force the flessh that is rawe. Certes, so thise shrewes ne holden hem nat apayed of roasted flessh and sode flessh with which the peple fedden hem in greet reverence, but they wole have raw flessh of folkes wyves and hir doghtres. And certes, thise wommen that consenten to hire harlotrie doon greet wrong to Crist and to hooly chirche and alle halwes, and to alle soules; for they bireven alle thise hym that sholde worshipec Crist and hooly chirche, and preye for cristene soules. And therfore han swiche preestes, and hire lemmanes eek that consenten to hir leccherie, the malisoun of al the court cristene, til they come to amendement.

The thridde spece of avowtrie is som tyme bitwixe a man and his wyf; and that is whan they take no

897. *Helie* (Eli), H<sup>6</sup> *Belie*, *Belial*. 898. *bole*, bull.  
902. *halwes*, saints.

reward in hire assemblynge but oonly to hire fleshly delit, as seith Seint Jerome; [905] and ne rekken of no thyng but that they been assembled. By-cause that they been married al is good ynough, as thynketh to hem. But in swich folk hath the devel power, as seyde the aungel Raphael to Thobie, for in hire assemblynge they putten Jhesu Crist out of hire herte, and geven hem-self to alle ordure.

The fourthe spece is the assemblee of hem that been of hire kynrede, or of hem that been of oon affynytee, or elles with hem with whiche hir fadres or hir kynrede han deled in the synne of lecherie. This synne maketh hem lyk to houndes that taken no kepe to kynrede. And certes, parentele is in two maneres, outhur goostly or fleshly: goostly, as for to deelen with hise godsibbes; for, right so as he that engendreth a child is his fleshly fader, right so is his godfader his fader espritueel; for which a womman may in no lasse synne assemblen with hire godsib than with hire owene fleshly brother.

[910] The fifthe spece is thilke abhomynable synne of which that no man unnethe oghte speke ne write, nathelees it is openly reherced in holy writ. This cursednesse doon men and wommen in diverse entente, and in diverse manere, but though that hooly writ speke of horrible synne, certes hooly writ may nat been defouled, namoore than the sonne that shyneth on the mixne.

904. *reward*, regard.

907. *kepe to*, H *heede of*.

908. *parentele*, relationship.

908. *godsibbes*, god-parents.

911. *mixne*, H<sup>2</sup> *donge-hille*.

Another synne aperteneth to leccherie that comth in slepyng; and this synne cometh ofte to hem that been maydenes, and eek to hem that been corrupt. And this synne men clepen polucioun, that comth in thre maneres. Somtyme of langwissynge of body, for the humours been to ranke and habundaunt in the body of man; somtyme of infermetee, for the fieblesse of the vertu retentif, as phisik maketh mencion; somtyme for surfeet of mete and drynke; and somtyme of vileyns thoghtes that been enclosed in mannes mynde whan he gooth to slepe, which may nat been withoute synne, for which men moste kepen hem wisely, or elles may men synnen ful greuously.

*Remedium contra peccatum Luxurie*

[915] Now comth the remedie agayns leccherie, and that is generally chastitee and continence, that restreyneth alle the desordeyne moevynges that comen of flesshly talentes. And evere the gretter merite shal he han that moost restreyneth the wikkede eschawfynges of the ordure of this synne; and this is in two maneres; that is to seyn, chastitee in mariage, and chastitee of widwehode. Now shaltow understonde that matrimoyne is leefful assemblynge of man and of womman, that receyven, by vertu of the sacrement, the boond thurgh which they may nat be departed in

915. *desordeyne*, etc., disorderly emotions of fleshly desires.

916. *eschawfynges*, chafings.

917. *leefful*, lawful.

al hir lyf, that is to seyn, whil that they lyven bothe. This, as seith the book, is a ful greet sacrament ; God maketh it, as I have seyde, in paradys, and wolde hymself be born in mariage ; and, for to halwen mariage, he was at a weddyng, where as he turned water in to wyn, which was the firste miracle that he wroghte in erthe bifore hise disciples.

[920] Trewe effect of mariage clenseth fornicacioun and replenysseth hooly chirche of good lynage, for that is the ende of mariage ; and it chaungeth deedly synne into venial synne bitwixe hem that been y-wedded, and maketh the hertes al oon of hem that been y-wedded, as wel as the bodies. This is verray mariage that was establissed by God, er that synne bigan, whan natureel lawe was in his right poynt in paradys, and it was ordeyned that o man sholde have but o womman, and o womman but o man, as seith Seint Augustyn, by manye resouns.

First, for mariage is figured bitwixe Crist and holy chirche, and that oother is, for a man is heved of a womman, — algate by ordinaunce it sholde be so. For, if a womman hadde mo men than oon, thanne sholde she have moo hevedes than oon, and that were an horrible thyng bifore God ; and eek a womman ne myghte nat plesse to many folk at oones. And also ther ne sholde nevere be pees ne reste amonges hem, for everich wolde axen his owene thyng ; and forther-over no man ne sholde knowe his owene engendrure, ne who sholde have his heritage, and the womman

921. *This is*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.922. *heved*, head.

sholde been the lasse biloved fro the tyme that she were conjoynt to many men.

[925] Now comth how that a man sholde bere hym with his wif; and namely in two thynges, that is to seyn, in suffraunce and reverence, as shewed Crist whan he made first womman. For he ne made hire nat of the heved of Adam, for she sholde nat clayme to greet lordshipe; for ther as the womman hath the maistrie she maketh to muche desray. Ther neden none ensamples of this, the experience of day by day oghte suffice. Also certes, God ne made nat womman of the foot of Adam, for she ne sholde nat been holden to lowe, for she kan nat patiently suffre. But God made womman of the ryb of Adam for womman sholde be felawe unto man. Man sholde bere hym to his wyf in feith, in trouthe, and in love, as seith Seint Paul, that a man sholde loven his wyf as Crist loved hooly chirche, that loved it so wel that he deyde for it; so sholde a man for his wyf if it were nede.

[930] Now how that a womman sholde be subget to hire housbonde, that telleth Seint Peter. First, in obedience. And eek, as seith the decree, a womman that is wyf, as longe as she is a wyf, she hath noon auctoritee to swere, ne bere witnesse, withoute leve of hir housbonde, that is hire lord,—algate he sholde be so by resoun. She sholde eek serve hym in alle honestee, and been attempree of hire array. I woot wel that they sholde setten hire entente to plesen hir housbondes, but nat by hire queyntise of array.

Seint Jerome seith that wyves that been apparailled in silk and in precious purple ne mowe nat clothen hem in Jhesu Crist. What seith Seint John eek in thys matere? Seint Gregorie eek seith that no wight seketh precious array, but oonly for veyne glorie to been honoured the moore biforn the peple. [935] It is a greet folye, a womman to have a fair array outward and in hir-self foul inward.

A wyf sholde eek be mesurable in lookynge, and in berynge, and in lawghynge, and discreet in alle hire wordes and hire dedes and aboven alle worldly thyng she sholde loven hire housbonde with al hire herte, and to hym be trewe of hir body. So sholde an housbonde eek be to his wyf, for, sith that al the body is the housbondes, so sholde hire herte been, or elles ther is bitwixe hem two, as in that, no parfit mariage.

Thanne shal men understonde that for thre thynges a man and his wyf fleshly mowen assemble. The firste is in entente of engendrure of children, to the service of God, for certes that is the cause final of matrimoyne. [940] Another cause is to yelden everich of hem to oother the dette of hire bodies, for neither of hem hath power over his owene body. The thridde is for to eschewe leccherye and vileynye. The ferthe is forsothe deedly synne. As to the firste, it is meritorie; the seconde also, for, as seith the decree, that she hath merite of chastitee that yeldeth to hire housbonde the dette of hir body, ye, though it be

agayn hir likyng and the lust of hire herte. The thridde manere is venyal synne, and trewely scarsly may ther any of thise be withoute venial synne, for the corrupcioun and for the delit. The fourthe manere is for to understonde if they assemble oonly for amorous love, and for noon of the foreseyde causes, but for to accomplice thilke brennyng delit, they rekke nevere how ofte, soothly it is deedly synne, and yet with sorwe somme folk wol peynen hem moore to doon than to hire appetit suffiseth.

The seconde manere of chastitee is for to been a clene wydewe and eschue the embracynges of man and desiren the embracynge of Jhesu Crist. [945] Thise been tho that han been wyves and han forgoon hire housbondes, and eek wommen that han doon lecherie and been releved by penitence. And certes, if that a wyf koude kepen hire al chaast by licence of hir housbonde so that she geve nevere noon occasion that he agilde, it were to hire a greet merite. Thise manere wommen that observen chastitee moste be clene in herte, as wele as in body and in thoughte, and mesurable in clothyng and in contenance, abstinent in etyng and drynkyng, in spekyng and in dede. They been the vessel, or the boyste of the blissed Magdelene that fulfilleth hooly chirche of good odour.

The thridde manere of chastitee is virginitee, and

946. *agilde*, sin.

947. *moste be clene* . . . *mesurable*, om. E.

947. *abstinent*, E and been *abstinent*.  
*boyste*, box.



it bihoveth that she be hooly in herte, and clene of body ; thanne is she spouse to Jhesu Crist, and she is the lyf of angeles. She is the preisyng of this world, and she is as thise martirs in egalitee. She hath in hire that tonge may nat telle, ne herte thynke. [950] Virginitee baar oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and virgine was hymselfe.

Another remedie agayns leccherie is specially to withdrawen swiche thynges as geve occasion to thilke vileynye, as ese, etyng and drynkyng ; for certes, whan the pot boyleth strongly the beste remedie is to withdrawe the fyr. Slepynge longe in greet quiete is eek a greet norice to leccherie.

Another remedie agayns leccherie is that a man or a womman eschue the compaignye of hem by whiche he douteth to be tempted, for al be it so that the dede is withstonden, yet is ther greet temptacioun. Soothly, a whit wal, although it ne brenne noght fully by stikyng of a candele, yet is the wal blak of the leyt. Ful ofte tyme [955] I rede, that no man truste in his owene perfeccioun, but he be stronger than Sampson, and hoolier than Danyel, and wiser than Salomon.

Now after that I have declared yow as I kan the sevene deedly synnes, and somme of hire braunches and hire remedies, soothly, if I koude, I wolde telle yow the ten comandementz ; but so heigh a doctrine I lete to divines ; nathelees I hope to God they been touched in this tretice everich of hem alle.

949. *egalitee*, evenness of mind. 949. *ne herte thynke*, om. H<sup>5</sup>.

954. *leyt*, flame.

*Sequitur secunda pars Penitencie*

Now, for as muche as the seconde partie of penitence stant in confessioun of mouth, as I bigan in the firste chapitre, I seye, Seint Augustyn seith, "Synne is every word and every dede, and al that men coveiten agayn the lawe of Jhesu Crist; and this is for to synne in herte, in mouth, and in dede, by thy five wittes, that been sighte, herynge, smellynge, tastynge or savourynge, and feelynge."

[960] Now is it good to understonde the circumstaunces that aggregeth muchel every synne. Thow shalt considere what thow art that doost the synne; wheither thou be male or femele, yong or oold, gentil or thral, free or servant, hool or syk, wedded or sengle, ordred or unordred, wys or fool, clerk or seculeer; if she be of thy kynrede bodily or goostly, or noon; if any of thy kynrede have synned with hire or noon, and manye mo thinges.

Another circumstaunce is this, wheither it be doon in fornicacioun or in avowtrie or noon, incest or noon, mayden or noon, in manere of homicide or noon, horrible grete synnes or smale, and how longe thou hast continued in synne. The thridde circumstaunce is the place ther thou hast do synne, wheither in oother mennes hous or in thyn owene, in feeld or in chirche or in chirchehawe, in chirche dedicaat or noon; [965] for if the chirche be halwed and man or

960. *the circumstaunces that*, E<sup>2</sup>  
*that that.*  
*agreggeth*, aggravate.

961. *ordred*, in holy orders.

964. *chirchewawe*, churchyard.

womman spille his kynde in-with that place, by wey of synne or by wikked temptacioun, the chirche is entredited til it be reconciled by the bysshope; and the preest that dide swich a vileynye, to terme of al his lif he sholde namoore synge masse, and if he dide he sholde doon deedly synne at every time that he so songe masse. The fourthe circumstaunce is, by whiche mediatours or by whiche messagers, as for enticement or for consentement to bere compaignye with felaweshipe,—for many a wrecche for to bere compaignye shal go to the devel of helle,—wherfore they that eggen or consenten to the synne been parteners of the synne and of the dampnacioun of the synnere.

The fifthe circumstance is, how manye tymes that he hath synned, if it be in his mynde, and how ofte that he hath falle; [970] for he that ofte falleth in synne he despiseth the mercy of God and encreesseth hys synne, and is unkynde to Crist, and he wexeth the moore fieble to withstonde synne and synneth the moore lightly. And the latter ariseth, and is the moore eschew for to shryven hym, namely to hym that is his confessour; for which that folk whan they falle agayn in hir olde folies, outhur they forleten hir olde confessours al outrelly, or elles they departen hir shrift in diverse places, but soothly swich departed shrift deserveth no mercy of God of hise synnes. The sixte circumstaunce is, why that a man synneth,

965. *entredited*, under an interdict.

968. *dampnacioun*, E<sup>2</sup> *temptacioun*.

971. *eschew*, unwilling.

972. *departen*, divide.

as by temptacioun, and if hymself procure thilke temptacioun, or by the excitynge of oother folke ; or if he synne with a womman by force, or by hire owene assent, or if the womman maugree hir hed hath been afforced or noon, this shal she telle ; for coveitise, or for poverte, and if it was hire procurynge or noon, and swiche manere harneys.

[975] The seventhe circumstaunce is, in what manere he hath doon his synne, or how that she hath suffred that folk han doon to hire, and the same shal the man telle pleyntyly with alle circumstaunces, and wheither he hath synned with comune bordel wommen or noon, or doon his synne in hooly tymes or noon, in fastyng tymes or noon, or biforn his shrifte, or after his latter shrifte, and hath peraventure broken therefore his penance enjoyned ; by whos helpe and whos conseil, by sorcerie or craft,—al moste be toold. Alle thise thynges, after that they been grete or smale, engreggen the conscience of man. And eek the preest, that is thy juge, may the bettre been avysed of his juggement in gevyng of thy penaunce, and that is after thy contricioun. [980] For understond wel that after tyme that a man hath defouled his baptesme by synne, if he wole come to salvacioun, ther is noon other wey but by penitence, and shrifte, and satisfaccioun ; and namely by the two, if ther be a confessour to which he may shriven hym, and the thridde, if he have lyf to parfournen it.

976. *borderl*, brothel.979. *engreggen*, weigh upon.981. *parfournen*, accomplish.

Thanne shal man looke and considere that if he wole maken a trewe and a profitable confessioun ther moste be foure condiciouns. First, it moot been in sorweful bitternesse of herte, as seyde the kyng Ezechiel to God, "I wol remembre me alle the yeres of my lif in bitternesse of myn herte." This condicioun of bitternesse hath fyve signes. The firste is, that confessioun moste be shamefast, nat for to covere ne hyden his synne, for he hath agilt his God and defouled his soule; [985] and ther-of seith Seint Augustyn, "The herte travailleth for shame of his synne, and for he hath greet shamefastnesse he is digne to have greet mercy of God." Swich was the confessioun of the puppican that wolde nat heven up hise eyen to hevene for he hadde offended God of hevene; for which shamefastnesse he hadde anon the mercy of God. And ther-of seith Seint Augustyn that swich shamefast folk been next forgivenesse and remissioun.

Another signe is humylitee in confessioun of which seith Seint Peter, "Humbleth yow under the myght of God." The hond of God is myghty in confessioun, for ther-by God forgeveth thee thy synnes, for he allone hath the power. And this humylitee shal been in herte and in signe outward; for right as he hath humylitee to God in his herte; right so sholde he humble his body outward to the preest that sit in Goddes place. [990] For which in no manere, sith that Crist is sovereyn and the preest meene and

983. *Ezechiel*, Hezekiah.989. *sit*, sitteth.

mediatour bitwixe Crist and the synnere, and the synnere is the laste by wey of resoun, thanne sholde nat the synnere sitte as heighe as his confessour, but knele biforn hym or at his feet, but if maladie destourbe it; for he shal nat taken kepe, who sit there, but in whos place that he sitteth. A man that hath trespassed to a lord and comth for axe mercy and maken his accord and set him down anon by the lord, men wolde holden hym outrageous and nat worthy so soone for to have remissioun ne mercy.

The thridde signe is, how that thy shrift sholde be ful of teeris, if man may; and if man may nat wepe with hise bodily eyen, lat hym wepe in herte. Swich was the confessioun of Seint Peter, for after that he hadde forsake Jhesu Crist he wente out and weepe ful bitterly. [995] The fourthe signe is, that he ne lette nat for shame to shewen his confessioun; swich was the confessioun of the Magdelene, that ne spared for no shame of hem that weren atte feeste for to go to oure Lord Jhesu Crist and biknowe to hym hire synnes. The fifthe signe is, that a man or a womman be obeisant to receyven the penaunce that hym is enjoyned for hise synnes, for certes Jhesu Crist for the giltes of a man was obedient to the deeth.

The seconde condicion of verray confession is that it be hastily doon; for certes, if a man hadde a deedly wounde, evere the lenger that he taried to warisshe hymself the moore wolde it corrupte and haste hym to his deeth, and eek the wounde wolde be the wors

for to heele ; and right so fareth synne that longe tyme is in a man unshewed.

[1000] Certes a man oghte hastily shewen hise synnes for manye causes ; as for drede of deeth that cometh ofte sodenly, and no certeyn what tyme it shal be, ne in what place ; and eek the drecchyng of o synne draweth in another ; and eek the lenger that he tarieth the ferther he is fro Crist. And if he abide to his laste day scarsly may he shryven hym, or remembre hym of hise synnes, or repenten hym for the grevous maladie of hise deeth. And for as muche as he ne hath nat in his lyf herkned Jhesu Crist whanne he hath spoken, he shal crie to Jhesu Crist at his laste day and scarsly wol he herkne hym.

And understand that this condicioun moste han foure thynges. Thi shrift moste be purveyed bifore and avysed, for wikked haste dooth no profit ; and that a man konne shryve hym of hise synnes, be it of pride, or of envye, and so forth, of the speses and circumstances ; and that he have comprehended in hys mynde the nombre and the greetnesse of hise synnes, and how longe that he hath leyn in synne ; [1005] and eek that he be contrit of hise synnes, and in stidefast purpos, by the grace of God, nevere eft to falle in synne ; and eek that he drede and countrewaite hymself that he fle the occasiouns of synne to whiche he is enclyned.

Also thou shalt shryve thee of alle thy synnes to o

1000. *drecchyng*, delaying.      1003. *avysed*, considered.  
1003. *purveyed*, provided.      1005. *countrewaite*, guard.

man, and nat a parcel to o man and a parcel to another; that is to understonde in entente to departe thy confessioun as for shame or drede, for it nys but stranglynge of thy soule. For certes Jhesu Crist is entierly al good; in hym nys noon inperfeccioun, and therfore outhere he forgeveth al parfitly, or never a deel. I seye nat that if thou be assigned to the penitauncer for certein synne that thou art bounde to shewen hym al the remenaunt of thy synnes of whiche thou hast be shryven to thy curaate, but if it like to thee of thyn humylitee; this is no departyng of shrifte. Ne I seye nat, ther as I speke of divisioun of confessioun, that if thou have licence for to shryve thee to a discreet and an honeste preest, where thee liketh, and by licence of thy curaate, that thou ne mayst wel shryve thee to him of alle thy synnes; [1010] but lat no blotte be bihynde, lat no synne been untoold, as fer as thou hast remembraunce. And whan thou shalt be shryven to thy curaate telle hym eek alle the synnes that thou hast doon syn thou were last y-shryven; this is no wikked entente of divisioun of shrifte.

Also, the verray shrifte axeth certeine condiciouns. First, that thou shryve thee by thy free wil, noght constreyned, ne for shame of folk, ne for maladie, ne swiche thynges, for it is resoun that he that trespasseth by his free wyl, that by his free wyl he confesse his trespass; and that noon oother man telle his synne but he hymself; ne he shal nat nayte ne denye

1008. *shryven to*, H<sup>3</sup> *shriven of*; 1012. *verray*, genuine.

1013. *nayte*, say no to.



his synne, ne wratthe hym agayn the preest for his amonestynge to leve synne.

The seconde condicioun is, that thy shrift be laweful, that is to seyn that thou that shryvest thee, and eek the preest that hereth thy confessioun, been verrailly in the feith of hooly chirche, [1015] and that a man ne be nat despeired of the mercy of Jhesu Crist as Caym or Judas. And eek a man moot accusen hymself of his owene trespas, and nat another, but he shal blame and wyten hymself and his owene malice of his synne and noon oother; but nathelees if that another man be occasioun or enticere of his synne, or the estaat of a persone be swich thurgh which his synne is aggregated, or elles that he may nat pleylnly shryven hym but he telle the persone with which he hath synned, thanne may he telle; so that his entente ne be nat to bakbite the persone, but oonly to declaren his confessioun.

Thou ne shalt nat eek make no lesynges in thy confessioun for humylitee, peraventure to seyn that thou hast doon synnes of whiche that thou were nevere gilty. [1020] For Seint Augustyn seith, "If thou by cause of thyn humylitee makest lesynges on thyself, though thou ne were nat in synne biforn, yet artow thanne in synne thurgh thy lesynges." Thou most eek shewe thy synne by thyn owene propre mouth, but thou be woxe dowmb, and nat by no

1013. *amonestyng*, admonishing.

1015. *Caym*, Cain.

1016. *wyten*, charge.

1017. *aggregated*, aggravated.

1019. *lesynges*, lies.

lettre, for thow that hast doon the synne thou shalt have the shame therfore. Thow shalt nat eek peynte thy confessioun by faire subtile wordes, to covere the moore thy synne, for thanne bigilestow thyself and nat the preest; thow most tellen it pleylnly, be it nevere so foul ne so horrible.

Thow shalt eek shryve thee to a preest that is discreet to conseille, and eek thou shalt nat shryve thee for veyne glorie, ne for ypocrisye, ne for no cause, but oonly for the doute of Jhesu Crist and the heele of thy soule. Thow shalt nat eek renne to the preest sodeynly to tellen hym lightly thy synne, as who so telleth a jape or a tale, but avysely, and with greet devocioun.

[1025] And, generally, shryve thee ofte. If thou ofte falle, ofte thou arise by confessioun, and though thou shryve thee ofter than ones of synne of which thou hast be shryven, it is the moore merite. And, as seith Seint Augustyn, thow shalt have the moore lightly relesyng and grace of God bothe of synne and of peyne. And certes, oones a yeere atte leeste wey is it laweful for to been housled, for certes, oones a yeere alle thynges renovellen.

Now have I toolde you of verray confessioun, that is the seconde partie of penitence.

1027. *been housled*, receive the Eucharist.  
*renovellen*, renew.

*Explicit secunda pars penitencie et sequitur tercia pars  
eiusdem*

The thridde partie of penitence is satisfaccioun and that stant moost generally in almesse, and in bodily peyne. [1030] Now been ther thre manere of almesses: contricioun of herte, where a man offreth hymself to God; another is to han pitee of defaute of hise neighebores; and the thridde is in geyvyng of good conseil and comfort, goostly and bodily, where men han nede, and namely in sustenance of mannes foode. And tak kepe that a man hath nede of these things generally, he hath nede of foode, he hath nede of clothyng and herberwe, he hath nede of charitable conseil and visitynge in prisone and in maladie, and sepulture of his dede body. And if thou mayst nat visite the nedeful with thy persone, visite hym by thy message and by thy giftes. These been generally almesses or werkes of charitee of hem that han temporeel riches or discrecioun in conseilynge. Of these werkes shaltow heren at the day of doome.

These almesses shaltow doon of thyne owene propre thynges, and hastily and prively if thou mayst; [1035] but natheles if thou mayst nat doon it prively, thou shalt nat forbere to doon almesse though men seen it, so that it be nat doon for thank of the world, but oonly for thank of Jhesu Crist; for, as witnesseth Seint Mathew, *capitulo* v., "A citee may nat been hyd that is set on a montayne, ne men lighte nat a lanterne

1030. *and comfort*, om. E<sup>2</sup>.

1031. *herberwe*, lodging.

and put it under a busshel, but men sette it on a candlestikke to geve light to the men in the hous ; right so shal youre light lighten bifore men, that they may seen youre goode werkes and glorifie youre Fader that is in hevene."

Now as to speken of bodily peyne ; it stant in preyeres, in wakynges, in fastynges, in vertuose techinges of orisouns.

And ye shul understonde that orisouns or preyeres is for to seyn a pitous wyl of herte that redresseth it in God, and expresseth it by word outward to remoeven harmes, and to han thynges espiritueel and durable, and somtyme temporele thynges, of whiche orisouns, certes, in the orison of the *Pater noster* hath Jhesu Crist enclosed moost thynges. [1040] Certes, it is privileged of thre thynges in his dignytee, for which it is moore digne than any oother preyere : for that Jhesu Crist hymself maked it ; and it is short, for it sholde be koud the moore lightly, and for to withholden it the moore esily in herte, and helpen hym self the ofter with the orisoun, and for a man sholde be the lasse wery to seyen it, and for a man may nat excusen hym to lerne it, it is so short and so esy ; and for it comprehendeth in itself alle goode preyeres.

The exposicioun of this hooly preyere that is so excellent and digne, I bitake to thise maistres of theologie, save thus muchel wol I seyn, that whan thou prayest that God sholde forgeve thee thy giltes

1038. *wakynges*, watchings.

1040. *his dignytee*, its worthiness.

1041. *koud*, known.

1043. *bitake*, entrust.

as thou forgevest hem that agilten to thee, be ful wel war that thou be nat out of charitee. This hooly orisoun amenuseth eek venyal synne, and therfore it aperteneth specially to penitence.

[1045] This preyere moste be trewely seyde, and in verray feith, and that men preye to God ordinatly and discreetly and devoutly, and alwey a man shal putten his wyl to be subget to the wille of God. This orisoun moste eek been seyde with greet humblesse and ful pure honesty, and nat to the anoyauce of any man or womman. It moste eek been continued with the werkes of charitee. It avayleth eek agayn the vices of the soule, for, as seith Seint Jerome, "By fastynge been saved the vices of the flessch, and by preyere the vices of the soule."

After this thou shalt understonde that bodily peyne stant in wakyng; for Jhesu Crist seith, "Waketh and preyeth that ye ne entre in wikked temptacioun." [1050] Ye shul understanden also, that fastynge stant in thre thynges: in forberynge of bodily mete and drynke, and in forberynge of worldly jolitee, and in forberynge of deedly synne, this is to seyn, that a man shal kepen hym fro deedly synne with al his myght.

And thou shalt understanden eek that God ordeyned fastynge; and to fastynge appertenen foure thinges: largenesse to poure folk, gladnesse of herte spiritueel, nat to been angry ne anoyed ne grucche

1044. *amenuseth*, lessens.  
1047. *vices* (2), E<sup>2</sup> *vertues*.

1051. *largenesse*, liberality.  
*grucche*, grumble.

for he fasteth, and also resonable houre for to ete by mesure, that is for to seyn, a man shal nat ete in untyme, ne sitte the lenger at his table to ete for he fasteth.

Thanne shaltow understonde that bodily peyne stant in disciplyne or techynge by word and by writynge or in ensample; also in werynge of heyres, or of stamyn, or of haubergeons on hire naked flessch, for Cristes sake, and swiche manere penaunces. But war thee wel that swiche manere penaunces on thy flessch ne make thee nat or angry or anoyed of thy self; for bettre is to caste away thyn heyre, than for to caste away the swetnesse of Jhesu Crist. And therfore seith Seint Paul, "Clothe yow, as they that been chosen of God, in herte, of misericorde, debonairetee, suffraunce," and swiche manere of clothynge, of whiche Jhesu Crist is moore apayed than of heyres or haubergeons or hauberkes.

[1055] Thanne is discipline eek in knokkyng of thy brest, in scourgyng with yerdes, in knelynges, in tribulacions, in suffryng paciently wronges that been doon to thee, and eek in pacient suffraunce of maladies, or lesyng of worldly catel, or of wyf, or of child, or othere freendes.

Thanne shaltow understonde whiche thynges destourben penaunce; and this is in foure maneres; that is, drede, shame, hope, and wanhope, that is, des-

1052. *heyres*, hair-shirts.

*slamyn*, linsey-woolsey.

*haubergeons*, coat of mail.

1053. *make thee nat*, I make

*nought thine herte bitter.*

1053. *swetnesse*, E<sup>2</sup> *sikernes*.

1054. *apayed*, pleased.

1055. *yerdes*, sticks.

peracioun. And for to speke first of drede, for which he weneth that he may suffre no penaunce. Ther-agayns is remedie for to thynke that bodily penaunce is but short and litel, at regard of the peynes of helle, that is so crueel and so long that it lasteth withouten ende.

[1060] Now again, the shame that a man hath to shryven hym, and namely thise ypocrites that wolden been holden so parfite that they han no nede to shryven hem. Agayns that shame sholde a man thynke that by wey of resoun that he that hath nat been shamed to doon foule thinges, certes hym oghte nat been ashamed to do faire thynges, and that is confessiouns. A man sholde eek thynke that God seeth and woot alle hise thoghtes and alle hise werkes ; to hym may no thyng been hyd ne covered. Man sholden eek remembren hem of the shame that is to come at the day of doome to hem that been nat penitent and shryven in this present lyf ; for alle the creatures in erthe and in helle shullen seen apertly al that they hyden in this world.

[1065] Now for to speken of hope of hem that been negligent and slowe to shryven hem ; that stant in two maneres. That oon is that he hopeth for to lyve longe and for to purchacen muche richesse for his delit, and thanne he wol shryven hym, and as he seith, hym semeth thanne tymely ynough to come to shrifte. Another is surquidrie, that he hath in Cristes

1058. *weneth*, E *demeth*.

1059. *at regard of*, compared to.

1067. *surquidrie*, over-confidence.

mercy. Agayns the firste vice, he shal thynke that oure lif is in no sikernes, and eek that alle the riches in this world ben in aventure and passen as a shadwe on the wal ; and, as seith Seint Gregorie, that it aperteneth to the grete rightwisnesse of God, that nevere shal the peyne stynte, of hem that nevere wolde withdrawen hem fro synne hir thankes, but ay continue in synne, for thilke perpetueel wil to do synne shul they han perpetueel peyne.

[1070] Wanhope is in two maneres : the firste wanhope is in the mercy of Crist ; that oother is that they thynken that they ne myghte nat longe persevere in goodnesse. The firste wanhope comth of that he demeth that he hath synned so greetly, and so ofte, and so longe leyn in synne, that he shal nat be saved. Certes, agayns that cursed wanhope sholde he thynke that the passion of Jhesu Crist is moore strong for to unbynde than synne is strong for to bynde. Agayns the seconde wanhope he shal thynke that as ofte as he falleth he may arise agayn by penitence ; and though he never so longe have leyn in synne, the mercy of Crist is alwey redy to receiven hym to mercy. Agayns the wanhope that he demeth that he sholde nat longe persevere in goodnesse, he shal thynke that the feblesse of the devel may no thyng doon but if men wol suffren hym, [1075] and eek he shal han strengthe of the helpe of God, and of al hooly chirche, and of the proteccioun of aungels, if hym list.

Thanne shal men understonde what is the fruyt of



penaunce ; and, after the word of Jhesu Crist, it is the endelees blisse of hevene. Ther joye hath no contrariouste of wo, ne grevaunce ; ther alle harmes been passed of this present lyf ; ther as is the siker- nesse fro the peyne of helle ; ther as is the blisful compaignye that rejoysen hem everemo everich of otheres joye ; ther as the body of man, that whilom was foul and derk, is moore cleer than the sonne ; ther as the body, that whilom was syk, freele, and fieble, and mortal, is inmortal and so strong and so hool that ther may no thyng apeyren it ; ther as ne is neither hunger, thurst, ne coold, but every soule replenyssed with the sighte of the parfit knowynge of God.

[1080] This blisful regne may men purchase by poverte espirituel, and the glorie by lowenesse, the plentee of joye by hunger and thurst, and the reste by travaille, and the lyf by mortificacioun of synne.

*Here taketh the Makere of this Book his Leve*

Now preye I to hem alle that herkne this lital tretys or rede, that if ther be any thyng in it that liketh hem, that ther-of they thanken oure Lord Jhesu Crist, of whom procedeth al wit and al goodnesse ; and if ther be any thyng that displese hem, I preye hem also that they arrette it to the defaute of myn

1077. *sikernes*, security.

1082. *arrette*, impute.

1078. *apeyren*, waste.

*Here taketh*, etc., H  
" *Preces de Chauceres*."

*defaute*, etc., default of  
my ignorance.

unkonnynge, and nat to my wyl, that wolde ful fayn have seyde better if I hadde had konnynge; for oure boke seith, "Al that is writen is writen for oure doctrine," and that is myn entente.

Wherfore I biseke yow mekely, for the mercy of God, that ye preye for me that Crist have mercy on me and forgeve me my giltes, [1085] and namely of my translaciouns and enditynges of worldly vanitees the whiche I revoke in my Retracciouns; as is the book of Troylus; the book also of Fame; the book of the five and twynety Ladies; the book of the Duchesse; the book of Seint Valentynes day, of the Parlement of Briddes; the Tales of Caunterbury,—thilke that sownen in to synne; the book of the Leoun; and many another book, if they were in my remembrance; and many a song and many a leccherous lay, that Crist, for his grete mercy, forgeve me the synne.

But of the translacioun of Boece *De Consolacione* and othere bookes of Legendes of Seintes, and omelies and moralitee, and devocioun, that thanke I oure Lord Jhesu Crist, and his blisful mooder and alle the Seintes of hevene, [1090] bisekyng hem that they from hennes forth unto my lyves ende sende me

1085. *my Retracciouns*, apparently a formal document.

1086. *the book of the five and twynety Ladies*, the "Legend of Good Women."

*sownen in to, tend to.*

1087. *the book of the Leoun*, lost

—probably a translation from Machault.

1087. *another book*, H<sup>2</sup> *other bokes.*

*remembrance*, H *mynde or remembraunce.*

1088. *of Legendes of*, H *of consolacioun and of Legendes of lyves of.*

grace to biwayle my giltes and to studie to the salva-  
cioun of my soule ; and graunte me grace of verray  
penitence, confessioun and satisfaccioun, to doon in  
this present lyf, thurgh the benigne grace of hym that  
is Kyng of Kynges, and Preest over alle Preestes, that  
boghte us with the precious blood of his herte, so  
that I may been oon of hem at the day of doome  
that shulle be saved. *Qui cum Patre et Spiritu  
Sancto vivis et regnas Deus per omnia secula. Amen.*

*Heere is ended the book of the Tales of Caunterbury,  
compiled by Geffrey Chaucer, of whos soule Jhesu Crist  
have mercy. Amen.*

1090. *grace* (2), H *grace* and 1092. *et Spiritu*, etc., curtailed  
*space.* to an "etc." in most MSS.

## GLOSSARY OF COMMON WORDS

Obsolete words which are not in frequent use in the *Canterbury Tales* will be found explained at the foot of the pages on which they occur. The present brief glossary contains for the most part only words too common or too easy to be explained every time they occur, but which may conceivably present some difficulty. *Y* in the middle of a word has been arranged with *i*.

*A*, card. num., *one*.  
*A*, prep. or adv., *on*, *in*.  
*Abaist*, abashed.  
*Abiden*, wait, abide.  
*Able*, fit, apt.  
*Aboght*, paid for, atoned for.  
*Abood*, delay.  
*Abregge*, abridge.  
*Abreyden*, awake, start.  
*Abye*, pay for, atone for.  
*Accidie*, moral sloth.  
*Accorden*, agree.  
*Adrad*, afraid.  
*Aferd*, afraid.  
*Affermed*, confirmed.  
*Affile*, file, polish.  
*Agayn*, toward, against.  
*Agilt*, in fault.  
*Agon*, past, departed.  
*Agrisen*, be horrified at.  
*Al*, adj. all; *al* and *som*, the whole.  
*Al*, adv. all, wholly, although.  
*Alderfirst*, first of all.

*Ale-stake*, a sign before an ale-house.  
*Aleggen*, allege.  
*Aleye*, alley.  
*Algate*, always.  
*Alle*, all (pl.).  
*Aller*, of all (pl.).  
*Allowe*, approve.  
*Al-so*, as.  
*Amenden*, improve.  
*Amenuse*, diminish.  
*Ameved*, moved, excited.  
*Amiddes*, in the midst of.  
*Amonesten*, admonish.  
*An*, in, on.  
*And*, if.  
*Andswere*, answer.  
*Anoint*, anointed.  
*Anonright*, forthwith.  
*Aornement*, ornament.  
*Apaid*, satisfied.  
*Ape*, metaphorically, a fool.  
*Apeyren*, impair, detract from.  
*Appallen*, make pale or feeble.

*Apparailen*, prepare.  
*Apparence*, appearance.  
*Apperceuyngs*, perceptions.  
*Appertenant*, appertaining to.  
*Appetyt*, appetite, desire.  
*Aquilen*, pay for.  
*Aracen*, tear up.  
*Arelten*, impute to.  
*Argoyle*, potters' clay.  
*Armipotent*, mighty in arms.  
*Arow*, in a row.  
*Arraye*, order, situation, clothing, equipage.  
*Arrayen*, dress, dispose.  
*Arsmetrik*, arithmetic.  
*Artow*, art thou.  
*Arwe*, arrow.  
*As* (as fast, as swithe, etc.), very.  
*Ascaunce*, as it were, as though.  
*Ashen*, ashes.  
*Aslake*, abate.  
*Assaut*, assault.  
*Assayen*, try.  
*Assegen*, besiege.  
*Assyse*, assize.  
*Assoilen*, absolve.  
*Assuren*, confirm.  
*Astat*, estate.  
*Asterle*, start away, escape.  
*Astoned*, astonished.  
*Astored*, stored.  
*Aswagen*, assuage.  
*Aswounne*, in a swoon.  
*Atake*, take.  
*Atones*, at once.  
*Attamen*, broach.  
*Atte*, at the.  
*Attempre*, temperate.  
*Atwynne*, apart.  
*Auctoritec*, a text of Scripture, or of some writer of weight.  
*Auter*, altar.  
*Avauncen*, profit.  
*Avaunten*, boast.  
*Aventure*, chance.

*Avision*, vision.  
*Avys*, advice.  
*Avyse*, observe, look to.  
*Avysement*, deliberation.  
*Avoutrie*, adultery.  
*Axe*, ask.  
*Awayt*, watch.  
*Awreke*, avenge.  
  
*BA*, kiss.  
*Bachelrie*, the body of bachelors.  
*Bailen*, feed.  
*Bale*, harm.  
*Balkes*, beams.  
*Balled*, bald.  
*Barel*, barrel.  
*Barayne*, barren.  
*Basin*, lap.  
*Bataille*, battle.  
*Bauderie*, gaiety.  
*Bayard*, a standard name for a horse.  
*Beautee*, beauty.  
*Bechen*, made of beech.  
*Bed-rede*, bed-ridden.  
*Bede*, bad.  
*Been*, to be, are, been.  
*Been*, bees.  
*Beheste*, promise.  
*Beme*, trumpet.  
*Bene*, bean.  
*Benedicite* (pronounced Ben'-cite), bless.  
*Beningnite*, benignity, kindness.  
*Berd*, hill-side.  
*Berde*, beard (To make any one's beard, to cheat).  
*Bere*, a bear.  
*Bere*, a bier.  
*Bere*, to bear, carry, comport;  
*bere in hand*, accuse falsely;  
*bere through*, pierce.  
*Beringe*, behaviour.  
*Berne*, yeast.  
*Berne*, barn.

*Best*, beast.

*Bet*, better; *go bet*, go quickly.

*Bete*, mend, prepare, esp. of kindling fires.

*Beyen*, buy.

*Bibbed*, drunk.

*Bibled*, covered with blood.

*Biched*, cursed.

*Bidafed*, made a fool of.

*Bifallen*, befall.

*Biginnen*, begin.

*Bigyle*, beguile.

*Biheste*, a promise.

*Bihighte*, promised.

*Bihoten*, promised.

*Bihoveful*, advantageous.

*Bijaped*, tricked.

*Biknowen*, confess.

*Byle*, bill, beak.

*Bileven*, believe.

*Bileven*, stay behind.

*Bill*, letter.

*Bischrewe*, beshrew, corrupt.

*Biseke*, beseech.

*Biset*, employed.

*Biseye*, beseech; *yuele* (*richely*)  
*biseye*, of an ill (rich) appearance.

*Bismotred*, soiled.

*Bistad*, placed.

*Bisy*, busy.

*Bit*, biddeth, bids.

*Bitake*, give, commend to.

*Bitought*, commended to.

*Ritid*, happened.

*Bitraysed*, betrayed.

*Biwreyen*, betray.

*Blak*, black.

*Blaked*, blackened.

*Blee*, colour, complexion.

*Blent*, blinded.

*Blent*, blenched.

*Blere*, blind, befool.

*Blew*, blue.

*Blod*, blood.

*Blosme*, blossom.

*Bobaunce*, boast.

*Bocher*, butcher.

*Boidekyn*, bodkin, dagger.

*Boiste*, box.

*Boystous*, rough.

*Bokeler*, buckler.

*Boket*, bucket.

*Bonde*, bondservant.

*Bone*, boon.

*Boon*, bone.

*Boor*, boar.

*Boot*, boat.

*Boras*, borax.

*Bord*, (1) a table, (2) a ship's side.

*Bore*, born.

*Borel*, coarse, plain.

*Borwe*, pledge.

*Bost*, boast.

*Bote*, (1) remedy, (2) boot, (3) boat.

*Botel*, bottle.

*Boterflye*, butterfly.

*Botm*, bottom.

*Bouk*, body.

*Boullen*, sift.

*Boun*, ready.

*Bountee*, goodness.

*Bounteous*, bountiful.

*Bourde*, jest.

*Bourden*, to jest.

*Boure*, chamber.

*Bowes*, boughs.

*Brak*, broke.

*Brast*, burst.

*Brede*, bread.

*Brede*, breadth.

*Breke*, break.

*Bren*, bran.

*Brennen*, burn.

*Brenningly*, hotly.

*Brent*, burnt.

*Breres*, briars.

*Bresten*, burst.

*Breyden*, wake suddenly.

*Bribe*, plunder.

*Bribour*, thief.  
*Brid*, bird.  
*Brist*, breast.  
*Brocage*, jobbery.  
*Broche*, brooch.  
*Brode*, broad.  
*Broyded*, embroidered.  
*Brond*, brand, torch.  
*Brood*, broad.  
*Brotel*, brittle.  
*Brouded*, embroidered.  
*Brouken*, enjoy.  
*Brustle*, bristle.  
*Bukke*, buck.  
*Burned*, burnished.  
*Buxom*, obedient.  
  
*CAAS*, case, occasion, hap.  
*Caitiff*, wretch.  
*Cakuled*, calculated.  
*Cam*, came.  
*Camaille*, camel.  
*Camuse*, flat.  
*Can*, know.  
*Cananee*, Cananean.  
*Cane*, Cana in Galilee.  
*Canevas*, canvas.  
*Cantel*, piece.  
*Capitayn*, captain.  
*Carf*, carved.  
*Carl*, churl.  
*Carp*, talk.  
*Cas*, case, occasion.  
*Casten*, plan.  
*Catel*, chattels.  
*Celle*, (1) a religious house, (2) the brain.  
*Ceptre*, sceptre.  
*Cerleyn*, (1) certainly, (2) a certain quantity.  
*Cesse*, cease.  
*Chaffare*, merchandise.  
*Chapman*, merchant.  
*Charge*, business of weight.  
*Ches*, chose.  
*Chepe*, purchase, bargain.

*Chepen*, buy.  
*Chere*, countenance, demeanour.  
*Cherice*, cherish.  
*Ches*, chose.  
*Chesen*, choose.  
*Cheste*, coffin.  
*Chevisaunce*, bargain.  
*Chiertee*, tenderness.  
*Chikne*, chicken.  
*Chirche*, church.  
*Chirk*, chirp, twitter.  
*Chit*, chideth.  
*Choys*, choice.  
*Citee*, city.  
*Clamb*, climbed.  
*Clappen*, clatter, babble.  
*Clepen*, call, cry.  
*Cloistre*, cloister.  
*Clos*, enclosure.  
*Cloutes*, small pieces.  
*Cock*, God.  
*Cod*, bag.  
*Cofre*, box.  
*Coillons*, testicles.  
*Cokewold*, cuckold.  
*Colde*, grow cold.  
*Coler*, collar.  
*Colered*, collared.  
*Combust*, burnt up.  
*Commune*, (1) common, (2) the commons.  
*Compassyng*, contrivance.  
*Compeer*, gossip.  
*Complin*, the last religious office of the day.  
*Composicioun*, agreement.  
*Condescende*, come down to.  
*Confus*, confounded.  
*Conne*, learn, know, be able; *conne thank*, be grateful.  
*Conning*, skill.  
*Conseil*, counsel.  
*Contenance*, countenance, appearance.  
*Contrarie*, contradict.

*Contrary*, adversary.  
*Contrefete*, counterfeit.  
*Coast*, coast.  
*Cop*, top, head.  
*Coppe*, cup.  
*Corage*, heart, inclination, courage.  
*Cornes*, corn-fields.  
*Corny*, strong of the corn, or malt.  
*Coroun*, crown.  
*Corrumpable*, corruptible.  
*Cors*, body.  
*Corsed*, cursed.  
*Coruen*, cut.  
*Costage*, cost.  
*Coste*, coast.  
*Couchen*, (1) lay, (2) embroider, (3) cower.  
*Coude*, knew.  
*Cours*, course.  
*Couthe*, knew.  
*Covenable*, convenient.  
*Covent*, convent.  
*Creaunce*, credit.  
*Creauncen*, borrow money.  
*Croys*, cross.  
*Crosselet*, crucible.  
*Cure*, care.  
*Curleys*, courteous.  
*Cut*, lot.  
  
*DAF*, fool.  
*Daliaunce*, playfulness.  
*Dampne*, condemn.  
*Dasuen*, grow dizzy.  
*Dawn*, dominus, sir.  
*Dauce*, dance, game.  
*Daunger*, danger.  
*Daungerous*, hard to please.  
*Dawen*, to dawn.  
*Dayerye*, dairy.  
*Dayesye*, daisy.  
*Debate*, strife.  
*Debaten*, fight.  
*Debonaire*, gentle.

*Dede*, deed, dead.  
*Deef*, deaf.  
*Deel*, part, whit.  
*Deer*, wild animals.  
*Dees*, dice.  
*Deeth*, death.  
*Defaute*, defect.  
*Defende*, forbid.  
*Degree*, step, rank in life.  
*Deyned*, deigned.  
*Deyntee*, value, pleasure.  
*Deynteous*, choice.  
*Deys*, dais.  
*Del*, part, whit.  
*Delyces*, delights.  
*Delit*, pleasure.  
*Demen*, judge.  
*Depeynt*, depicted.  
*Depper*, deeper.  
*Dere*, dear.  
*Dereling*, darling.  
*Deren*, harm.  
*Derk*, dark.  
*Descryue*, describe.  
*Detteles*, free from debt.  
*Devyse*, speak of.  
*Deyen*, die.  
*Diffame*, ill name.  
*Digne*, worthy, proud.  
*Discryue*, describe.  
*Dispence*, expenditure.  
*Dispitous*, cruel.  
*Disputison*, dispute.  
*Distourben*, disturb.  
*Distreynen*, constrain, vex.  
*Diversely*, variously.  
*Divinistre*, divine.  
*Divisionoun*, distinction.  
*Do*, cause to.  
*Doghtren*, daughters.  
*Doke*, duck.  
*Dominacioun*, supremacy.  
*Don*, done, caused.  
*Dong*, dung.  
*Doom*, judgment.  
*Doon*, done, caused.



*Doseyn*, dozen.  
*Douteles*, without doubt.  
*Dradde*, feared.  
*Drecched*, harassed.  
*Drede*, fear, doubt.  
*Dredeles*, without doubt.  
*Dredful*, (1) terrible, (3) timorous.  
*Drenchen*, drown.  
*Dressen*, prepare, set in order.  
*Dreynt*, drowned.  
*Drogges*, drugs.  
*Droghte*, drought.  
*Dronkelew*, drunken.  
*Drow*, drew.  
*Duc*, duke, captain.  
*Dullen*, make dull.  
*Dure*, endure.  
*Dwellen*, dwell, delay.

*ECHON*, each one.  
*Eft*, again.  
*Eftsoone*, presently.  
*Eylen*, ail.  
*Eir*, air.  
*Elles*, else, otherwise.  
*Elvyssh*, elf-like, abstracted, mischievous.  
*Embrouded*, embroidered.  
*Emeraude*, emerald.  
*Empryse*, enterprise.  
*Encres*, increase.  
*Endelong*, throughout the length of.  
*Endyte*, relate.  
*Enlumyned*, illuminated.  
*Enoynt*, anointed.  
*Entenden*, attend.  
*Entente*, intention.  
*Er*, ere, before.  
*Ere*, ear.  
*Ernestful*, serious.  
*Esen*, entertain.  
*Est*, east.  
*Estaat*, condition, rank.  
*Everich*, every.

*FADER*, father.  
*Faire*, fairly.  
*Falle*, happen.  
*Falsen*, falsify.  
*Famulier*, familiar.  
*Fare*, proceedings.  
*Faren*, go, speed, behave.  
*Faucon*, falcon.  
*Fay*, faith.  
*Feet*, deed, work.  
*Fel*, fierce.  
*Felawe*, fellow.  
*Feld*, field.  
*Fele*, many.  
*Felony*, criminality.  
*Femininitee*, womanhood.  
*Fend*, fiend.  
*Fer*, far.  
*Ferde*, fared, behaved.  
*Fere*, companion; *in fere*, together.  
*Ferforth*, far forward; *so ferforth*, to such an extent.  
*Ferther*, further.  
*Fest*, fist.  
*Feste*, feast.  
*Festne*, fasten.  
*Fet*, fetched.  
*Fey*, faith.  
*Fil*, fell.  
*Fyn*, end.  
*Fynt*, finds.  
*Fir*, fire.  
*Fithel*, fiddle.  
*Flambes*, flames.  
*Flete*, float.  
*Floytinge*, fluting.  
*Flour*, flower.  
*Foinen*, thrust.  
*Folwe*, follow.  
*Fond*, found.  
*Fonde*, try.  
*For-*, an intensive prefix; *for-dronk*, *for-dry*, *for-old*, very drunk, dry, old.  
*Forbede*, forbid.

*Fornecs*, furnace.  
*Fors*, force ; *no fors*, no matter.  
*Forthy*, therefore.  
*Forward*, agreement.  
*Forwhy*, wherefore.  
*Foryelde*, requite.  
*Fother*, cartload.  
*Fraunchise*, frankness, generosity.  
*Freletec*, frailty.  
*Frere*, friar.  
*Frotelk*, rubs.

*GABBE*, talk idly.  
*Gadred*, gathered.  
*Gaf*, gave.  
*Galwes*, gallows.  
*Gan*, began.  
*Gayler*, gaoler.  
*Gayne*, avail.  
*Geaunt*, giant.  
*Gerdoun*, guerdon, reward.  
*Gere*, (1) gear, clothing, (2) fashion.  
*Gesse*, guess.  
*Gide*, *Gye*, guide.  
*Gilt*, guilt.  
*Gyn*, engine, contrivance.  
*Ginne*, begin.  
*Gise*, manner, fashion.  
*Glade*, gladden.  
*Glede*, burning coal.  
*Glose*, comment, flatter.  
*Gobet*, morsel.  
*Goost*, *Gost*, ghost, spirit.  
*Gouvernaille*, government.  
*Grave*, graven, buried.  
*Gre*, pleasure.  
*Greete*, greeted.  
*Gret*, great.  
*Grucche*, grumble.

*HABOUNDE*, abound.  
*Halt*, holds.  
*Han*, to have.  
*Harneys*, harness, armour.

*Harwed*, harrowed.  
*Hasardour*, gamester.  
*Hastif*, hasty.  
*Haunt*, custom.  
*Heed*, head.  
*Heeng*, hung.  
*Heer*, hair.  
*Hegge*, hedge.  
*Hele*, health.  
*Helen*, (1) heal, (2) hide.  
*Hem*, them.  
*Hende*, courteous, adroit.  
*Heng*, hung.  
*Hente*, seize.  
*Hepe*, heap.  
*Her*, *Hir*, their.  
*Heraud*, herald.  
*Herberwe*, lodging.  
*Here*, their, theirs.  
*Here*, hair.  
*Herkne*, hearken.  
*Herte*, heart.  
*Herye*, praise.  
*Hethenesse*, heathendom.  
*Hevede*, head.  
*Hewe*, hue.  
*Hye*, (1) high, (2) haste.  
*Highte*, was called.  
*Hir*, their.  
*Hire*, plur., her.  
*Hit*, hides.  
*Holly*, wholly.  
*Hond*, hand.  
*Hool*, whole.  
*Hoom*, home.  
*Humblesse*, humility.

*ICH*, I.  
*Ilke*, same.  
*In*, *inne*, inn.  
*Infortunat*, unfortunate.  
*Irous*, passionate.

*JANGLE*, chatter.  
*Jape*, jest.  
*Jogelour*, juggler.

*Joly*, jolly.  
*Joynant*, joining.  
*Juge*, judge.  
*Juste*, joust, tourney.

*KEMBE*, combed.  
*Kepe*, care, attention.  
*Kerve*, carve.  
*Kesse*, kiss.  
*Kymelyn*, brewing-tub.  
*Kynde*, nature.  
*Kithe*, show.  
*Knave*, boy.  
*Knoves*, knees.  
*Kouthe*, known.

*LABBYNG*, blabbing.  
*Lad*, led.  
*Lafte*, left, ceased.  
*Lasse*, less.  
*Laws*, loose.  
*Lay*, (1) creed, (2) song.  
*Lazar*, leper.  
*Leef*, dear.  
*Leet*, caused to be done.  
*Leeve*, believe.  
*Leful*, lawful.  
*Lemes*, limbs.  
*Lemman*, lover.  
*Lene*, lend, grant.  
*Lenger*, longer.  
*Lere*, learn.  
*Lese*, lose.  
*Lesynges*, lies.  
*Lest*, pleasure.  
*Leste*, please.  
*Leste*, least.  
*Lete*, leave.  
*Lete*, caused to be done.  
*Lette*, hindrance.  
*Leve*, believe.  
*Leve*, dear.  
*Leve*, permission.  
*Lewed*, ignorant.  
*Leyser*, leisure.  
*Liche*, like.

*Lyf*, life.  
*Liggen*, lie.  
*Lyghte*, lighten.  
*Lyghte*, alighted.  
*Liken*, please.  
*Likerous*, playful, lustful.  
*Liklihede*, likelihood.  
*Lym*, limb.  
*Lisse*, relief.  
*Lite*, little.  
*Lith*, a limb.  
*Lith*, lieth.  
*Lyves*, living.  
*Loft*, on loft, on high.  
*Loke*, look.  
*Loken*, locked.  
*Lond*, land.  
*Lone*, loan.  
*Longen*, belong to.  
*Loos*, praise.  
*Lorn*, lost.  
*Los*, loss.  
*Loth*, (1) loathsome, (2) unwilling.  
*Lough*, laughed.  
*Lust*, pleasure, desire.  
*Lustyhede*, pleasure, mirth.  
*Luxurie*, lustfulness.

*MAAD*, made.  
*Maat*, dejected.  
*Madde*, be mad.  
*Maister*, master.  
*Maistow*, mayst thou.  
*Make*, fellow, mate.  
*Maked*, made.  
*Manace*, menace.  
*Manere*, manner.  
*Markis*, marquis.  
*Mase*, be perplexed.  
*Mathynketh*, seems good to me.  
*Maugre*, in spite of.  
*May*, virgin.  
*Maydenhede*, virginity.  
*Mede*, (1) meed, (2) mead,  
 (3) meadow.  
*Meest*, most.

*Memorie*, remembrance.

*Mencioun*, mention.

*Mene*, mean, intend.

*Mene*, middle.

*Merciabie*, merciful.

*Mervaille*, marvel.

*Message*, messenger.

*Messe*, mass.

*Mesurable*, moderate.

*Mesure*, moderation.

*Mette*, (1) dreamt, (2) met.

*Meve*, move.

*Meynee*, company, household.

*Mysboden*, injured.

*Mo*, more.

*Moche*, *mochel*, much, great.

*Moder*, mother.

*Mone*, moon.

*Moo*, more.

*Moote*, must, may.

*Mordre*, murder.

*Morwe*, morrow.

*Moste*, must.

*Mote*, must, may.

*Moue*, may.

*Muchel*, much.

*NA*, no.

*Nadde*, *ne hadde*, had not.

*Nam*, *ne am*, am not.

*Namely*, especially.

*Narwe*, narrow.

*Nas*, *ne was*, was not.

*Nat*, not.

*Nath*, *ne hath*, hath not.

*Natheles*, nevertheless.

*Ne*, not, nor.

*Nede*, need.

*Nedely*, of necessity.

*Neigh*, near.

*Nempne*, name.

*Ner*, nearer.

*Nere*, *ne were*, were not.

*Neven*, name.

*Neue*, newly.

*Nexte*, nearest.

*Nyce*, foolish.

*Nil*, *ne will*, will not.

*Nin*, *ne in*, nor in.

*Nis*, *ne is*, is not.

*Niste*, *ne wiste*, knew not.

*Nobleye*, nobleness.

*Nolde*, *ne wolde*, would not.

*Non*, none.

*Nones*, for the *nones*, for the time, on occasion.

*Noon*, none.

*Noot*, *ne woot*, knew not.

*Norice*, nurse.

*Nosethurles*, nostrils.

*Not*, *ne wot*, knew not.

*Note*, need.

*Nother*, *ne other*, nor other.

*Nowel*, *Noel*, Christmas.

*Nowth*, now.

*Noyen*, annoy.

*O*, one.

*Obeysaunt*, obedient.

*Observaunce*, respect, ceremony.

*Of*, off.

*Offended*, hurt.

*Oynement*, ointment.

*Oynouns*, onions.

*Oystre*, oyster.

*On*, on, in, at.

*On*, one.

*Ones*, once.

*Onloft*, aloft.

*Oo*, one.

*Ook*, oak.

*Oon*, one.

*Oones*, once.

*Opie*, opium.

*Other*, either, or.

*Out-taken*, except.

*Outther*, either, or.

*Outrely*, utterly.

*Over*, above, besides.

*Overal*, everywhere, in every way.

*Overest*, uppermost.

*Owen*, ought.  
*Owene*, own.  
*Ower*, anywhere.

*PAAS*, pace.  
*Pace*, pass on, pass away, sur-  
 pass.  
*Payde*, pleased.  
*Payen*, pagan.  
*Pan*, skull.  
*Papegay*, parrot.  
*Parage*, high birth.  
*Paraunter*, peradventure.  
*Pardee*, par Dieu.  
*Parfay*, par foi.  
*Parfit*, perfect.  
*Parfourne*, perform.  
*Parishens*, parishioners.  
*Pas*, pace.  
*Pecunial*, pecuniary.  
*Pees*, peace.  
*Peyne*, pain.  
*Peynen*, take pains.  
*Peynt*, painted.  
*Penaunt*, penitent.  
*Penible*, painful, painstaking.  
*Penoun*, pennant.  
*Pens*, pence.  
*Peple*, people.  
*Peraventure*, perchance.  
*Personne*, parson, person.  
*Pertourben*, disturb.  
*Piled*, bald.  
*Piler*, pillar.  
*Pille*, plunder.  
*Pyne*, pain.  
*Pynen*, torture.  
*Pitous*, pitiful.  
*Plat*, flat.  
*Pley*, play.  
*Pleyn*, plain.  
*Pleynen*, complain.  
*Plesaunce*, pleasure.  
*Plye*, bend.  
*Plyghte*, plucked, pulled.  
*Plit*, plight.

*Popet*, puppet.  
*Poraille*, poor folk.  
*Portrey*, depict.  
*Poure*, poor.  
*Predicacyon*, preaching.  
*Prees*, press, crowd.  
*Preise*, praise.  
*Prest*, priest.  
*Prest*, ready.  
*Preve*, proof.  
*Preven*, prove, try.  
*Preye*, pray.  
*Prime*, the time between 6 and  
 9 A.M.  
*Prys*, price, estimation, praise.  
*Pryvee*, secret, familiar.  
*Pryvely*, secretly.  
*Prow*, profit.  
*Pure*, mere, very.  
*Pured*, purified, refined.  
*Purveiaunce*, provision, provi-  
 dence.  
*Purveye*, provide.

*QUAD*, evil.  
*Qualme*, sickness.  
*Queynte*, quaint, strange, ele-  
 gant.  
*Queynte*, pudenda muliebra.  
*Queynte*, quenched.  
*Queyntise*, trimness, cunning.  
*Quellen*, kill.  
*Quene*, queen, quean.  
*Quik*, alive.  
*Quiken*, bring to life, kindle.  
*Quit*, acquitted, free.  
*Quite*, requite, acquit.  
*Quod*, said.  
*Quook*, quaked.

*RAA*, roe.  
*Rad*, read.  
*Rafte*, reft.  
*Rage*, play wantonly.  
*Rakel*, hasty.  
*Rather*, sooner, earlier.

*Raughte*, reached.  
*Real*, royal.  
*Reame*, realm.  
*Recche*, reck.  
*Reccheles*, careless.  
*Rede*, advise.  
*Redoutynge*, reverence.  
*Reed*, red.  
*Reed*, advice.  
*Reful*, refuge.  
*Regne*, kingdom.  
*Reken*, reckon.  
*Relese*, release.  
*Remenaunt*, remnant.  
*Remeve*, *remewe*, remove.  
*Reneye*, deny.  
*Renne*, run.  
*Renovele*, renew.  
*Repreue*, reproof.  
*Resoun*, reason.  
*Rethour*, orator.  
*Revers*, reverse.  
*Rewe*, row.  
*Rewen*, rue.  
*Rewthe*, ruth, pity.  
*Richesse*, riches.  
*Rist*, riseth.  
*Rit*, rides.  
*Rode*, rood, cross.  
*Roghte*, recked.  
*Rokkes*, rocks.  
*Rombel*, rumble, rumour.  
*Rome*, walk about.  
*Romyng*, walking.  
*Ronne*, ran.  
*Rood*, rode.  
*Roser*, rose-bush.  
*Roughthe*, recked.  
*Route*, company.  
*Rowne*, whisper.  
*Rowtyng*, snorting.  
*Rumbel*, rumble, rumour.  
  
*SAD*, constant, grave.  
*Sadly*, steadily.  
*Salue*, *salewe*, salute.

*Sanguyn*, blood red.  
*Sauf*, (1) safe, (2) save, except.  
*Saugh*, saw.  
*Sawle*, soul.  
*Savacioun*, salvation.  
*Savoure*, taste, relish.  
*Sawe*, word, saying.  
*Sawtrie*, psalter.  
*Say*, saw.  
*Scarsly*, scarcely, hardly.  
*Scathe*, harm.  
*Schaltow*, shalt thou.  
*Sclaundre*, slander.  
*Scldre*, slender.  
*Scole*, school.  
*Scoleye*, study.  
*Sechen*, seek.  
*Secree*, secret.  
*See*, seat.  
*Seel*, seal.  
*Seen*, see.  
*Seigh*, saw.  
*Seyl*, sail.  
*Seint*, saint.  
*Seystow*, sayest thou.  
*Seke*, sick.  
*Selde*, seldom.  
*Selve*, self, very, same.  
*Sely*, simple, innocent.  
*Semblable*, like.  
*Semblaunce*, *semblaunt*, appearance.  
*Semely*, seemly, comely.  
*Sentence*, meaning, opinion.  
*Septemtrioun*, north.  
*Servage*, servitude.  
*Sesoun*, season.  
*Sethe*, seeth, boil.  
*Seurement*, security.  
*Seuretee*, certainly, security.  
*Sewe*, follow.  
*Sey*, saw.  
*Seye*, say.  
*Seystow*, sayest thou.  
*Shallow*, shalt thou.  
*Shamfast*, modest.

*Shape*, plan.  
*Shende*, harm, disgrace.  
*Shene*, bright.  
*Shette*, shut.  
*Shilde*, shield, avert.  
*Sholde*, should.  
*Shonde*, harm.  
*Shoop*, shaped.  
*Shoures*, showers.  
*Shrewe*, rascal, scold.  
*Shrewednesse*, rascality.  
*Shrift*, confession.  
*Shrighte*, shrieked.  
*Skulde*, should.  
*Shuldres*, shoulders.  
*Sib*, related to.  
*Sike*, sigh.  
*Sike*, sick.  
*Siker*, sure, safe.  
*Sikernesse*, security.  
*Sin*, since.  
*Sis*, six.  
*Sit*, sitteth.  
*Sithen*, since.  
*Skile*, reason.  
*Skilful*, reasonable.  
*Slake*, slacken, abate.  
*Slawe*, slain.  
*Slee*, sleen, slay.  
*Sleep*, slept.  
*Sleigh*, sly, crafty.  
*Slider*, slippery.  
*Slow*, slew.  
*Slye*, sly, crafty.  
*Smerte*, smart.  
*Smyt*, smiteth.  
*Snybbe*, rebuke.  
*Sobre*, sober, thoughtful.  
*Socoure*, succour.  
*Sodeyn*, sudden.  
*Solas*, solace, sport.  
*Solempne*, solemn.  
*Somdel*, somewhat.  
*Somone*, *sompne*, summon.  
*Sond*, sand.  
*Sonde*, message, messenger.

*Sone*, son.  
*Sonne*, sun.  
*Soore*, sore.  
*Sootle*, sweet.  
*Soper*, supper.  
*Sophyme*, sophism.  
*Sort*, chance, lot.  
*Sorwe*, sorrow.  
*Sorrowful*, sorrowful.  
*Sory*, sad, luckless.  
*Sotke*, sooth, truth.  
*Sotil*, subtle, cunning.  
*Souked*, sucked.  
*Soun*, sound.  
*Soune*, sound, tend to.  
*Soupen*, sup.  
*Sourden*, rise from.  
*Sours*, source.  
*Sours*, rising.  
*Sowdan*, *soldan*, sultan.  
*Sowne*, sound, tend to.  
*Spak*, spake.  
*Sparwe*, sparrow.  
*Speces*, kinds.  
*Spede*, speed, despatch.  
*Spere*, (1) sphere, (2) spear.  
*Spyced*, 'doctored,' artificial.  
*Spille*, perish.  
*Spores*, spurs.  
*Spradde*, spread.  
*Spreynd*, sprinkled.  
*Springen*, sprinkle.  
*Stal*, stole.  
*Stant*, stands.  
*Starf*, died.  
*Stark*, stiff.  
*Stente*, stop.  
*Sterre*, star.  
*Sterte*, start, escape.  
*Sterve*, die.  
*Steven*, voice.  
*Styborn*, stubborn.  
*Stiked*, stuck, pierced.  
*Stynle*, stop.  
*Stierte*, started.  
*Styves*, stews, brothels.

*Styward*, steward.  
*Stonde*, stand.  
*Stoon*, stone.  
*Stoor*, store, estimation.  
*Stoor*, strong, headstrong.  
*Stope*, advanced.  
*Storial*, historical.  
*Stounde*, time, moment.  
*Stree*, straw.  
*Streen*, race, lineage.  
*Stremes*, beams.  
*Strook*, stroke.  
*Subget*, subject.  
*Subtiltee*, subtlety, trick.  
*Suffisaunce*, sufficiency.  
*Suffraunce*, endurance.  
*Suspect*, suspicious.  
*Suster*, sister.  
*Swal*, swelled.  
*Swappe*, strike.  
*Swatte*, sweated.  
*Swerd*, sword.  
*Sweven*, dream.  
*Swich*, such.  
*Swynke*, work.  
*Swithe*, quickly.  
*Swyve*, have sexual intercourse with.  
*Swough*, swoon.

*TAFFRAYE*, to affray, frighten.  
*Tallege*, to allege.  
*Talyghte*, to alight.  
*Tamende*, to amend.  
*Tassaille*, to assail.  
*Teche*, teach.  
*Teen*, sorrow.  
*Tembrace*, to embrace.  
*Tendyte*, to endite.  
*Tendure*, to endure.  
*Tenqueren*, to enquire.  
*Tentify*, attentively.  
*Tespye*, to espy.  
*Texpounden*, to expound.  
*Texted*, supplied with texts or aphorisms.

*Textuel*, verbally accurate.  
*Thanne*, then.  
*Thar*, need.  
*Tharray*, the array.  
*The*, thee.  
*Thee*, thrive.  
*Theeche*, *thee ich*, thrive I.  
*Theffect*, the effect.  
*Thennes*, thence.  
*Ther*, where.  
*Therthe*, the earth.  
*Thestat*, the estate, rank.  
*Thider*, thither.  
*Thilke*, the same, that.  
*Thise*, these.  
*Tho*, then.  
*Tho*, these.  
*Thoght*, thought.  
*Thorpe*, village.  
*Threttene*, thirteen.  
*Thridde*, third.  
*Thries*, thrice.  
*Thrope*, thorpe, village.  
*Throwe*, time, while.  
*Thurgh*, through.  
*Til*, to.  
*To*, too.  
*To*, an intensive prefix, *to-braste*, *to-breke*, *to-hewe*, = burst, break, hew, in pieces.  
*To-forn*, before.  
*Togider*, together.  
*Tonge*, tongue.  
*Tonne*, cask.  
*Toord*, excrement.  
*Towle*, backside.  
*Tredesfowel*, treader of fowls, cock.  
*Tresoun*, treason.  
*Tretee*, treaty.  
*Trewe*, true.  
*Triste*, trust.  
*Trone*, throne.  
*Truwel*, hole.  
*Tweye*, two.  
*Twynne*, depart.



*UNCOUTHE*, strange, rare.  
*Uncovenable*, inconvenient.  
*Undergrowe*, undergrown.  
*Undertake*, assert.  
*Undigne*, unworthy.  
*Unfestliche*, un-feast-like.  
*Unkonnyng*, ignorant.  
*Unkouth*, strange, rare.  
*Unnethes*, hardly.  
*Unsad*, unsteady, inconstant.  
*Unset*, not appointed.  
*Unwar*, unawares.  
*Unweld*, unwieldy.  
*Unwemmed*, unspotted.  
*Unwittynge*, not knowing.  
*Unyolden*, unyielded.  
*Up*, up, upon.  
*Up-so-down*, upside down.  
*Upright*, full length, whether standing or lying.  
*Upriste*, up-rising.  
*Upsterte*, started up.  
*Upswal*, swelled up.  
*Usage*, habit.

*VENERYE*, hunting.  
*Venym*, poison.  
*Verament*, truly.  
*Verray*, true.  
*Veyn*, vain.  
*Viage*, voyage.  
*Vilanye*, anything unbecoming a gentleman.  
*Vitaille*, victuals.  
*Voyde*, empty, expel.

*WAAR*, aware.  
*Wayke*, weak.  
*Wayte*, watch.  
*Wailynge*, watching.  
*Wake*, watch.  
*Wan*, won, gained.  
*Wanhope*, despair.  
*War*, aware, wary.  
*Warisshe*, heal.  
*Wedde*, pledge.

*Weder*, weather.  
*Welde*, wield, govern.  
*Wele*, wealth.  
*Wem*, spot.  
*Wende*, to go.  
*Wende*, thought.  
*Wene*, ween, think.  
*Werre*, war.  
*Werreye*, war against.  
*Wery*, weary.  
*Wessh*, washed.  
*Wex*, wax.  
*Wex*, waxed, grew.  
*Weyle*, wail.  
*Wher*, (1) where, (2) whether.  
*Whyl*, whilst.  
*Wyke*, week.  
*Wikke*, wicked, bad.  
*Willow*, wilt thou.  
*Wyn*, wine.  
*Wircke*, work.  
*Wys*, wise.  
*Wisly*, certainly.  
*Wite*, (1) know, (2) blame.  
*Withseye*, contradict.  
*Wode*, mad.  
*Wol*, will.  
*Wolde*, would.  
*Woltow*, wilt thou.  
*Wonder*, wonderful.  
*Wone*, custom.  
*Wonen*, to dwell, be accustomed.  
*Wood*, mad.  
*Wook*, awoke.  
*Woost*, knowest.  
*Woot*, knows.  
*Worthy*, brave.  
*Wost*, knowest.  
*Wrave*, angry.  
*Wreke*, avenge.  
*Wreye*, betray.

*Y-*, O.E. *ge-*. For participles with this prefix see the simple verbs.

*Ydel*, idle ; *in ydel*, in vain.

*Ydolastre*, idolater.

*Yelpe*, boast.

*Yerd*, (1) stick, (2) yard.

*Yerne*, briskly, eagerly.

*Yet*, moreover.

*Y-liche*, like.

*Yolle*, yell.

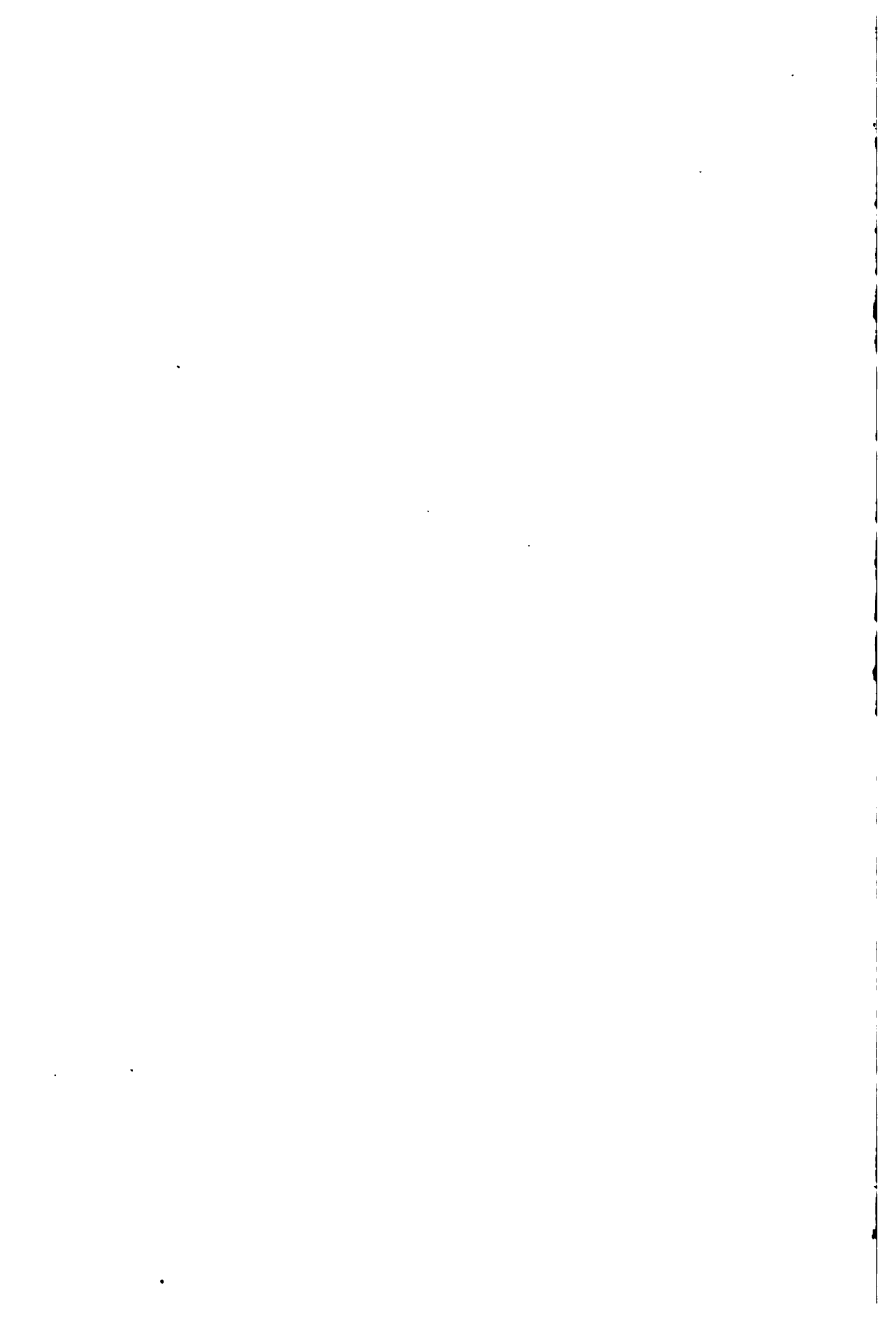
*Yond*, yonder.

*Yow*, you.

*Yvel*, evil.

*Y-wis*, certainly

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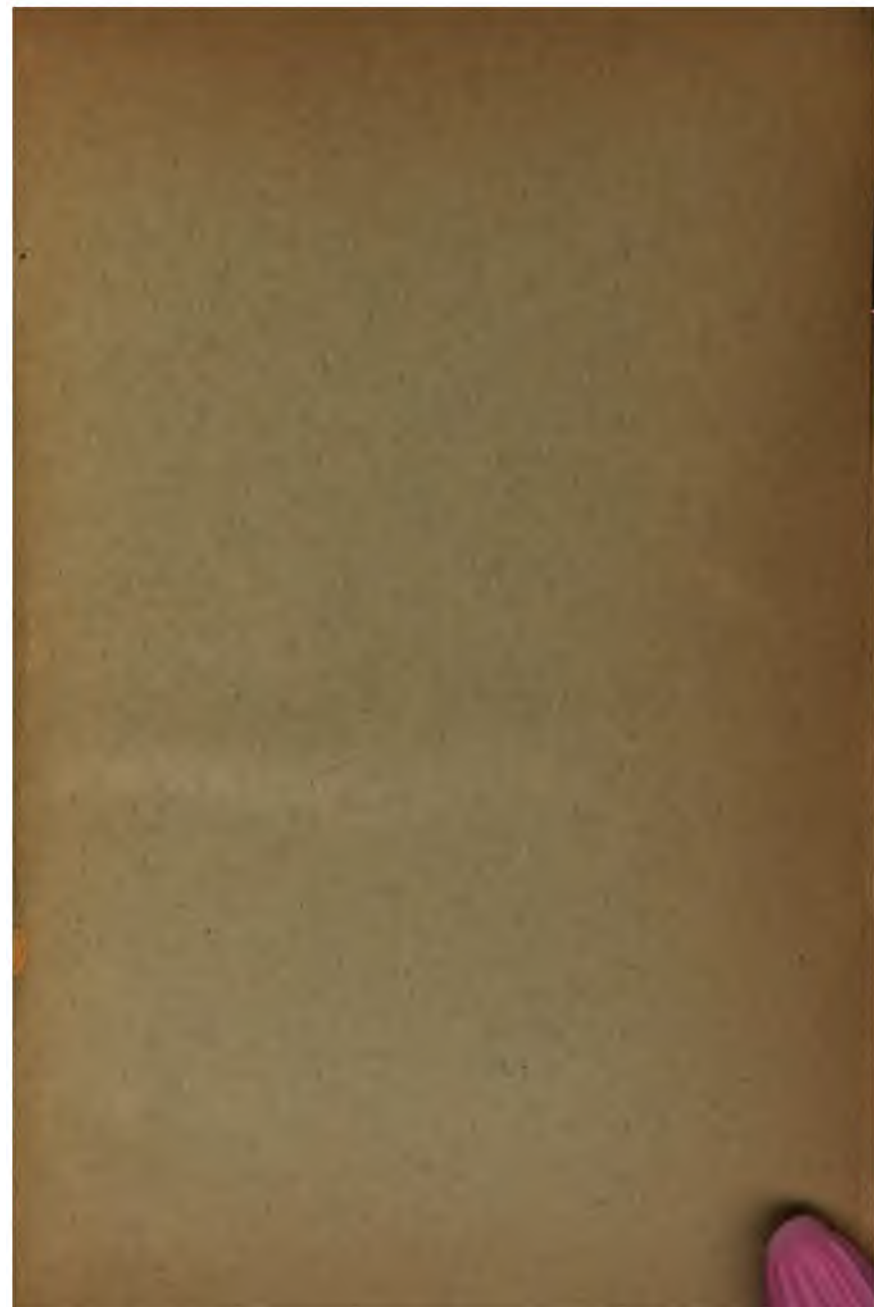
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